

# MARRIAGE and FAMILY LIFE

Edited by Abraham B. Shoulson

*A Jewish View*

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Marriage and Family Life  
*A Jewish View*



# MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

*A Jewish View*

*Edited by* ABRAHAM B. SHOULSON

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*Dedicated to My Parents*

RABBI JOSEPH CHAIM and REBECCA LEAH  
OF BLESSED MEMORY

*whose teachings, example and influence  
taught us the true meaning of  
“KIDDUSHIN”*

Sociology

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## Introduction

Sixty-six out of every hundred marriages do not end in divorce. This book is mostly for those people who aim in one way or another to make a success of their marriage and their family life. It is not for them exclusively, however, because there is always the hope that the other thirty-four will emulate the sixty-six. That is why this book does not devote very much space to divorce. This book is for people who marry for life.

Almost all of the books on marriage available to the average reader seek to prepare the man and woman for marriage through "scientific" methods. Marriage is certainly understood to be a dynamic relationship between two people, with rough spots as well as smooth spots to be realistically anticipated. A recent report of the National Conference of Family Life states: "Marriage fails because of the failure of the individuals who marry. The real grounds for divorce lie in the character defects of one or both spouses which can be summed up in selfishness and lack of consideration." If selfishness is a common factor in failing marriages, then unselfishness, which means putting the welfare of your spouse first, is an excellent recipe for all who seek happiness in marriage. This is what Zangwill meant by his statement: "Selfishness is the only atheism; unselfishness the only real religion."

We all know many people who do live satisfactory and happy lives. While life is often a battle, or at times a reaction against some things, it is also an expression of a positive, dynamic feeling which makes for genuine happiness.

We must recognize that motives for marriage are often mixed. Reasonable adults do not expect marriage to be a permanent honeymoon, nor to remain completely absorbed in each other forever. Love, which is the basic ingredient in any marriage, is not a fixed and unchanging state; it is a growing, dynamic, reciprocal relationship involving the reactions of two human beings.

Our purpose in this volume is to encourage young and old, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers, grandfathers and grandmothers, to improve their role as participants in marriage and family life. Our chief aim is to reassure those who are already married that success is readily attainable. Making marriage work means exerting a concerted effort. It does not mean becoming servant, scapegoat, caretaker, or nurse to husband and children. Least of all does it mean taking the joy out of life by taking a marriage too seriously or simply tolerating marriage in a state of "co-existence," of continuous "cold war." Happiness in marriage is not to be found only in pleasure. Someone has said that trying to find happiness in pleasure is like trying to keep a light going all night by striking one match after another. A pleasure is a flare of light which brightens for a moment and is gone. After all, the supply of matches is bound to be limited.

With faith, good will, normal intelligence, and humor sprinkled with a liberal supply of common sense, a man and a woman have every reason to expect their marriage to be a success. The children of a couple who look upon marriage in this manner, guided by their parents' example are most likely to be useful, happy human beings. In order to have a happy marriage you should have a happy childhood, and in order to have a happy childhood you should have parents who are happy themselves. Happiness is not an accident; it is an achievement. To aid in this achievement

we have brought together within the confines of this book the thoughts of thirty Rabbis, who have combined exceptionally sharp insights into the spiritual values inherent in our faith to guide our daily lives into happier marriage channels. They all emphasize the "preventive-maintenance" approach to normal happy marriage and family life.

Rabbis have always been students of life. Rabbis are teachers. A rabbi-teacher will thus stimulate a spontaneous search for the roots of life. The rabbi-teacher is therefore more and more assuming the duties and responsibilities of the counsellor. This is true because religion and life cannot be separated, and genuine religion is a prerequisite to the real happiness which can be achieved in the fullness of life.

Rabbis are expected to officiate at the rites prescribed for birth, marriage, and death, the three most significant experiences in our lives. Rabbis are being called upon increasingly to counsel the engaged couple during the pre-marital and post-marital periods; to counsel in husband and wife relations which usually touch upon the subject of parent-child difficulties, as well as those problems related to elderly and aging parents. And which rabbi has not been called upon to counsel in cases where marriage outside of the faith is contemplated? This book, therefore, deals with these five most critical and important areas of marriage and family life.

The Table of Contents makes it quite apparent that this book is divided into five sections. First, the Jewish view of marriage is presented which stresses the *Kiddushin* or holiness aspects of romance and love between the bride and groom, who are then shown how to develop a Jewish home-life with the highest ideals of marriage in their minds and the loftiest concepts in their hearts, making godliness the watchword of their lives. The Fifth Commandment

is among those engraved on the First Tablet of the Laws of Piety towards God, because parents stand in the place of God in the eyes of their children. Therefore, in the order of this book, the Jewish view of "Fifth Commandment Families" follows next, stressing the rewards and blessings of happy parent-child relationships. The book then considers the problem of inter-marriage and mixed marriage, offering some very sound counsel to those who contemplate marriage outside of the faith of Judaism. The fifth portion deals primarily with age, growing old, aged parents, and the many social problems which arise as a result of the conflicts of advancing years. Each section is prefaced by the editor's brief introduction.

Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform spiritual leaders and teachers have contributed to this volume. There are discourses, addresses, essays, and sermons. While there may be some differences in the form of the contributions, they all stimulate thinking and provide ample material for hope and faith based on the vast storehouse of our great Jewish tradition. They cover many subjects and range over many areas of human relationships which come with marriage and family living. Yet they all possess one great underlying common denominator. Their basic aim is to help people become more and more themselves. In addition to the vast treasury of Jewish lore and wisdom, they have also interpreted the basic teachings of our religious heritage in the light of the behavior sciences, especially psychology and sociology.

I wish to express my appreciation to my colleagues for their fine contributions which made this book possible. They all wrote with remarkable intellect and spiritual penetration. Two of the contributors, who are no longer among the living, left behind them a legacy of great literary achievement. Rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman died in June, 1948. I am grate-

ful to Mrs. Liebman for her permission to include her husband's brilliant contribution. Rabbi Barnett R. Brickner, who died last summer, was among the first to send his contribution to this volume. May the memory of the righteous always remain for a blessing.

I am grateful to Mr. Jack Steinberg, Managing Editor of Twayne Publishers who has been an indispensable editorial guide and counsellor throughout the preparation of this book. Miss Ethel Jacobowitz, who is a brilliant teacher of English, read the entire manuscript and made many very valuable suggestions. This book will be easier to read because of her painstaking attention, and I thank her for her kindness and patience with me.

I am greatly indebted to my dear wife, who has made our marriage — *Kiddushin* — by giving of herself in complete understanding, devotion, and affection on the level of "every day's most quiet need, by sun or candlelight." Only children can bring a certain ring of laughter to a household. Ira and Jolene, our son and daughter, have brightened our home by their cheerfulness. Only an older person can contribute a certain unshakable tranquility to a home. Mother Rebecca Barkan's presence among us has given us just that. Our truly happy home has been my inspiration for bringing this book to the reader. Human beings cannot be reminded too often that they are capable of achieving the miracle of a happy marriage and family life.

ABRAHAM B. SHOULSON  
Chanukah 5719 — December, 1958

Congregation Bnai Bezalel  
"The Central Synagogue"  
Chicago



# **I**

**KIDDUSHIN**

**THE HOLINESS OF MARRIAGE**



## THE HOLINESS OF MARRIAGE

God created marriage. In the Bible we are told: "And God said: 'It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helpmate.'" Adam already had the whole world created for himself—the sun, the moon, the stars, the wonders of the animal world and the beauty of all plant life. Yet, in the midst of all the wonderful world, the heart of Adam beat in loneliness.

Then Adam was made to fall into a deep slumber and the rib for the creation of Eve was taken from his side. When he later aroused himself from his deep sleep he saw Eve before him in all her grace, beauty and charm. At that wonderful moment the pattern of marriage for all time to come was created with the proclamation: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they shall become one flesh." (Gen. 2:24.) Thus was the first couple united in marriage.

The wedding was celebrated with pomp never to be repeated in the future course of human events. "Ten gorgeous 'huppot'—bridal canopies, studded with gems and pearls did God erect for Eve whom He Himself gave away in marriage, while the angels danced and beat timbrels and stood guard over the bridal chambers." (Pirke Rabb. Eli-ezer XII.) God himself, in concert with the Host of His Angels, who surrounded the marriage canopy, pronounced the blessings upon the bridal couple: "And God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth." (Gen. 1:28.)

The union of Adam and Eve embodied all of the in-

gredients of marriage, including the necessary elements of surprise and mystery. The Talmud tells us of the matron who questioned Rabbi Jose:

"Why did God find it necessary to place Adam under a deep slumber in order to remove his rib by stealth to create the woman?"

In return the Rabbi asked: "Do you call it stealing when one takes away an ounce and returns a pound?"

"This is not an answer to my question," retorted the matron. "What I wanted to understand is, why was it necessary for Adam to have been asleep when Eve was created out of his rib. Surely God did not inflict pain upon Adam in the process."

The Rabbi then explained: "If Adam had been allowed to see the woman in her incomplete state in the process of creation, he would have surely been displeased with her."

"This is so correct" said the matron. "And in addition, it was necessary to add the element of surprise and mystery in order to bring forth Adam's love for Eve. I once cherished the hope that I might marry my mother's brother, but he went to a far-off place and married a woman said to be less beautiful. No doubt he left me because he knew me as I grew up into mature womanhood. He knew me too well."

God did not reserve the discovery of a "helpmate" only for Adam. Every day since, some young man discovers anew the beauty, the loveliness, the surprise, and mystery of womanhood. He discovers as did Adam before him that man alone is merely a "half-soul," incomplete, requiring the woman to complete his being. "He who has no wife cannot be considered a whole man." So couples have entered into the sacred covenant of wedlock ever since. God is creating the world anew constantly by causing marriages to take place.

In the Jewish mystical writings of the *Zohar* we are told that "when a soul is sent down from heaven it is a combined male and female soul. The male enters the male child and the female part enters the female child. If they are worthy God causes them to re-unite in marriage." This is true mating. The Talmud tells us that "Forty days before the creation of a child a Voice proclaims in heaven so and so's daughter for so and so's son!" "No man without a wife, no woman without a husband and no couple without God." (Br. Rab. 7.) Thus marriages are indeed "made in heaven."

There is a quaint rabbinic story to illustrate this. The matron asked of Rabbi Jose: "What has God been doing ever since He completed the work of creation?"

"The Holy One," answered the Rabbi, "has been sitting in Heaven arranging marriages."

"Is that all?" answered the matron in surprise. "I can take care of that myself easily enough. I have a thousand slaves who could be paired off and married in a very short time!"

"I hope you will find it that easy," said the Rabbi. "In heaven it is considered as difficult as the dividing of the Red Sea." When the Rabbi left, the matron ordered her slaves to pair off in couples to be married, all at once.

On the following day after this mass wedding ceremony, the poor victims came to their mistress to complain bitterly. One had a broken nose, another had a black eye, a third a broken leg; all were suffering from some mishap. In one voice they demanded that their marriages be dissolved by their mistress. The matron then admitted to the Rabbi that she at last understood the difficulties in match-making and wisely resolved that marriages are indeed "made in heaven."

Marriage has the stamp of Divinity. The Jewish ideal of Marriage is—*Kiddushin*. Holiness and sanctification which are the signs of Divine unity create the oneness of man and

woman in family unity and harmony. Judaism insists upon this holiness in marriage. The Talmud joins the Bible in stressing the sanctification of marriage. "God dwells with the faithful husband and wife. Without Him they are consumed by the fire of strife." (Sota 17.) Our holy books and our religious literature emphasize the holiness of marriage which has been woven into the beautiful ceremony hallowed by our Jewish tradition.

When a man and a woman set out on the road of life, hand in hand and heart with heart, trusting that the "strength of the stronger can be used to elicit the strength from the weaker," they make of their marriage what our Jewish tradition calls *Kiddushin*—a blessed togetherness worthy of sanctification unto God.

# What Makes for a Happy Marriage?

BY HYMAN JUDAH SCHACHTEL

RABBI HYMAN JUDAH SCHACHTEL is the author of *The Real Enjoyment of Living which has been translated into Braille*, and *The Life You Want to Live*; conducts a weekly radio program — “The Humanitarian Hour” and writes a weekly column “The Enjoyment of Life” for the Houston Post. He was ordained at the Hebrew Union College and is now the Senior Rabbi at Temple Beth Israel in Houston, Texas.

## What Makes for a Happy Marriage?

Let me tell you what seems to me to constitute the primary requirements for a happy marriage, out of my own personal experience and study, as well as from what I have concluded after well nigh twenty years in the ministry. To begin with, there must be attraction. We have to be drawn to one another. But far more important is mutual respect. We need to have respect for the other person's intellect, capacities and judgment. If a woman doesn't respect her husband's intelligence and wisdom and his capacity to earn a living, then I am afraid that she will soon find him, regardless of his good looks, a very unattractive man. Equally, if a husband comes to believe that his wife is inept, that she is a very poor manager of the house, that she has poor taste, that she is a miserable cook, that she lacks good judgment; then, regardless of her beauty, she becomes to him an unattractive female. Mutual respect, to me, is the first foundation stone upon which one can build the structure of successful marriage.

Whenever I speak with young people, I look for the opportunity to stress this point of mutual respect. I want you to know that it isn't easy to convince young people nowadays that mutual respect is the most important qualification for happy marriage. To an alarming extent, young people seem to believe that if they are physically attracted to someone that this will be quite enough on which to build a secure marriage. When we consider the stress on beauty which the cinema makes, that literature stresses, that every advertisement of fashion and style presents, it is not surprising that surface attractiveness is esteemed

so highly. Now let no one imagine for a moment that I am decrying the importance of attractive personal appearance. Indeed, it is a very significant factor in human relationships. The very first question we ask about anyone is, "what does he or she look like?" My point is that outer appearance should only be the introduction to one's knowledge of another person. We should not stop with just being impressed with somebody's good looks. Having mentioned good looks, let me say in passing that a charming personality is far more attractive than mere physical beauty. All of us know of people who are not good looking but who are very popular and regarded to be most attractive primarily because of an ingratiating personality. Undoubtedly, we must look deeper than surface appearance. We ought to find out the intellectual strength, the mental vitality of the other person. If a marriage is to be happy, then the two people concerned should find one another stimulating to be with intellectually. Without this quality there is very little for the marriage to grow on and, sooner or later, that marriage becomes a humdrum affair. This doesn't mean that people have to be highly educated in order to have a happy marriage. I am not inferring that the more degrees you have from college, the more chance there is that you will have a better marriage. I am talking about common sense, native intelligence, down-to-earth realism, and that marvelous capacity to know what is significant and what is unimportant. If a person comes to me and says, "my wife is extravagant," then it is possible to rectify this mistake; or someone says, "my husband spends too much time on outside activities," this can be altered for the better; or should someone say, "we don't get along with one another's relatives" or "we suffer from physical incompatibility," all these very serious problems can, under the right direction, be helped and corrected. But, if I am told, "my husband or my wife is stupid" or "I have

no respect for his or her judgment," then the situation is well-nigh impossible and there is very little that can be done about it. Mutual respect, the respect for the other person's mind, the respect for the other person's all-round ability to do a good job of whatever it may be that one is doing—this is the first essential requirement for the happy marriage.

However, mutual respect is only the first essential. There must also be an awareness of unselfish, self-sacrificing love. Both the husband and wife must feel that they come first in all considerations. If you are married and you come to believe that you are not the end in itself, but a means to an end, that the other person married you for a selfish motive, then your marriage can never be happy. There is a popular belief that love must come first above all other considerations in the life of the woman, whereas, a career is the first love of the man. I, for one, am completely opposed to this popular notion insofar as man is concerned. I maintain that in a happy marriage, love must come first for both wife and husband. Of course there are many, many marriages which go on and are what you might call good marriages in which careers are regarded to be of greater importance than one's wife, and there are many marriages in which a woman regards her social career to be more important than her husband. But I would not call these the really happy marriages. In a happy marriage, you know that you come first, regardless of what is involved. It is a source of unlimited joy to a husband or a wife, knowing that his or her happiness is the supreme objective of his or her mate. I recall an exquisite verse from that beautiful love poem of the Bible called "Song of Songs" which reads . . . "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine . . ." There is no obstacle I know of in the path of a marriage that cannot be overcome when two people have this kind of an unselfish relationship and

when they possess this unique strength of self-sacrificing love. Those who get married for lesser reasons, because they think they ought to be married or to provide themselves with a meal-ticket or to gain some social standing, or no matter what the particular motive may be; those who marry with ulterior purposes in mind, will find marriage a disappointment and will never know the real glory of a profoundly satisfying romance.

Another basic essential for a happy marriage is compatibility. Nowadays when we mention compatibility we usually mean physical or sexual compatibility. As important as this is, it is only one vital part of a larger mosaic of blending interests consisting, for example, of the enjoyment of the same kind of people, the same kind of ideas and books. If two young people want to be certain to find their marriage in the divorce court, let them have very few interests in common, let them be poles apart, opposites in their sense of humor, in their spiritual values, in their social interests. The happiest marriages are those marriages in which the parties concerned have most in common. In a really happy marriage there is such a tremendous degree of sympathy and *empathy* between husband and wife that often they anticipate one another's needs without any need of speaking about them. There is very little need for explanations. They communicate with one another even in their silences. This does not mean that the individuality of the husband and wife in a happy marriage must be obscured. When I say that compatibility means a blending of interests and the enjoyment of the same kind of people and books and things, I still leave much room for what the poet Gibran describes as "spaces in your togetherness." Surely we do not want people to surrender their own claim to original personality when they get married. We do not wish the husband or the wife to become shadows of their former selves, phantoms of what they once were.

The truth is that if a marriage is a happy one, it will bring out the very finest and the best and the highest and the noblest in the people concerned. I wonder if I will be fully understood when I say that in a happy marriage we are released, we are freed to enjoy life, to be ourselves, to make the maximum contribution in working with and in friendship with others. Both husband and wife who are physically and spiritually and mentally compatible are united in a great comradeship, to be sure, but it is the kind of comradeship which makes of them better citizens, better human beings, infinitely better people who add to the happiness of all those around them.

In his very fine essay "The Art of Marriage" André Maurois insists that it is very important in any marriage that the husband and wife should make the resolve that their marriage is going to be a success. I wonder how long it is going to take for us to realize that people just don't get married and happiness results automatically, the way it does in the fairy tales where we read . . . "and they were married and lived happily ever after." A happy marriage is created, directed, nurtured, developed. It takes a lot of work to make marriage a success. It requires the ability to fight against taking one another for granted. It demands that we let nothing stand in the way of making our marriage a success. We need consideration for one another, we need a sense of humor. Above all, the happy marriage must be the goal that we seek with all of our hearts and souls. That it is worthwhile, no one can deny, for a happy marriage means a happy home, happy children; a happy marriage represents the fulfillment of our dreams, the joy of great companionship, of perfect partnership. To all those who are about to be married, yes, and to all those who are married, I call upon you to recognize the sanctity of marriage. It is by no means a relationship to be entered into lightly, nor can it be successful without serious effort.

In Hebrew the word for marriage is *Kiddushin*, which literally translated doesn't mean marriage at all, but "sanctification." Perhaps this is the clue to the happy marriage; this idea that marriage is sanctification—the sanctification of the commonplace, the sanctification of our animal desires, the sanctification of life itself. Of all the goals in life worth winning, greater than fame and fortune, greater than any mundane power or glory I know, is the happy marriage founded upon mutual respect, compatibility and unselfish love. And there is no more certain way to achieve the better world we all desire; for when men and women are happily married, they are inspired mentally and spiritually to believe in and to strive for the realization of the blessings of justice and brotherly love among all mankind.



# The Duet of Life

BY JEROME D. FOLKMAN

RABBI JEROME D. FOLKMAN *is the author of The Cup of Life and Design for Jewish Living; has written for scholarly journals and popular magazines. Chairman of the Committee on Marriage, Family and the Home of the Central Conference of American Rabbis; was from 1955 to 1957 President of the Ohio Conference on Family Relations. He was ordained at the Hebrew Union College and he is at present the Rabbi of Temple Israel in Columbus, Ohio.*

## The Duet of Life

Judaism regards marriage as a contract rather than a sacrament. Like a business contract, marriage establishes a partnership. The marriage and business partnerships differ from each other with respect to motivation.

Profit is the principal motive for a business partnership. Most business contracts provide for the dissolution of a partnership if it should appear unprofitable. The sacred marriage partnership is motivated by love, an overwhelming concern for the happiness and well-being of the other. In a sense, it might be said that the motivation for marriage is the opposite of the motivation in a business partnership. In the latter case, the desire is to derive benefit for one's self; in the former the desire is to benefit by contributing to his or her happiness and well-being. It is love that makes the covenant of marriage holy.

The relationship of a loving pair might be compared with that of two musicians who undertake to play a duet together. Each plays his own instrument with its own individuality. Each musician must express himself through his own instrument. Moreover, the musical scores will call for different talents at different times from each musician. One passage may be more difficult for the one while another passage might be a greater challenge to the other. In such instances, one would not ridicule the other but would try to be as helpful as possible, assisting, or at least waiting patiently until the difficulty is mastered. But both musicians must follow the same score!

It would hardly be possible for them to produce harmonious results if each worked on a different piece of

music. So, in life, husband and wife must direct themselves to the same high goals. Each will make his own contribution in his own way, fully expressing his own personality, for the happiness and well-being of the other. The fruit of such labors is the beauty of harmony, a joy to those who produce it and a satisfaction to those who witness it.

In my experience, I have found that there can be no more destructive notion in a marriage than the popular view that "marriage is a fifty-fifty proposition." In each of life's situations, the husband or the wife may be called upon to give more than the other, sometimes on a sixty-forty basis, sometimes seventy-thirty, and sometimes ninety-ten, but never fifty-fifty. The heavier responsibility may go in one direction at some times, or in the other at other times, depending upon which is better able to cope with a particular situation, the husband or the wife. Couples that try to divide responsibility evenly on a fifty-fifty basis are really dooming their own happiness.

The bride and the groom who go forward into life, preparing to meet its joys and its sorrows together, resolved to help each other in love and devotion, will find life's joys enriched and its sorrows softened.



# Be Patient and Loving

BY MARTIN M. WEITZ

RABBI MARTIN M. WEITZ is the author of *Timberline*, a book of verse, "Wind-Whispers" a series of radio talks, of *Year Without Fear*, and *Life Without Strife*, etc. He was ordained at the Hebrew Union College, and is now the Rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

## Be Patient and Loving

Some moments ago you drank from the same cup in the solemnity of this occasion, your wedding. In silence you have taken to heart the gladness of a few drops of wine and the happiness of a new life. Even as you give each other wine cheerfully, so give each other freedom cheerfully and words and deeds of endearment. "Expressions and actions of one sort or another are as necessary to the life of affection as leaves are to the tree. If they are wholly restrained, love will die at the roots." Mutually feel "I am my lover's and my lover is mine." Maintain the gladness of this moment. Learn to understand that words are mighty and living things, and, like music, are the language of the soul; that they are symbolic of a beautiful personality; that love and freedom—two of the most fundamental aims in your "silent meditation" of "I am my lover's and my lover is mine"—are not sufficient without the additional use of intelligently conceived deeds and sincerely expressed words of endearment.

Drink together from this cup of life. May all its draught be sweet as the wine you have tasted. Drink to each other for "thy love is better than wine." May the poetry of the seasons and the beauty of growing things be your portion. May soft lament be turned to moments of joy and may happiness of a lifetime be derived from these moments of gladness. May your cup of life be filled with rich, sweet wine. May you sing even in a whisper. "I am my lover's and my lover is mine."

At this union of souls you stand on the threshold of two lives made one, made happy by love and meaningful

by patience. We often hear the words: "Be patient and loving." Love is not merely mutual admiration. It is a life-time of mutual offering, sacrifice, patience. One can be truly loving only when patient. Giving and not demanding love comes only from a love that is refined by sacrifice and sustained by patience.

"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had for her." Well may we take to heart the spiritual significance of this utterance. In the presence of love time is as naught and seven years' labor is but play. Love may be compared to a high-powered lens through which those involved may see the beauty and grandeur of the whole universe. Under the soothing and magnetic influence of love, the eye begins to see the beautiful in all things; the ear begins to hear the melody in all things. Even as Jacob served Rachel, serve ye each other, in patience and in sacrifice, for if husband and wife truly love each other, nothing will be too difficult, no weather will be too stormy, no sacrifice will be too unendurable, no patience will be too great.

Such be your patience for it "ornaments the woman and proves the man." Such be your love for it cannot do enough for the happiness of the beloved.

If life has meaning to us at all, it possesses it because of love. It is that which enshrines and ennobles our human experience. It is the basis for the peace of family and the peace of the peoples of the earth. The greatest gift which Mother Nature and Father Time have bestowed upon humans is the gift not of demanding but of giving love between man and woman.

If expressed wisely and understandingly, it calls forth a corresponding devotion from the other person. Under its soothing and magnetic power the eye perceives new beauty in all things, the ear hears new melody in all things,

the soul finds new meaning in all things, at least for the two of you.

May the ring you are about to wear symbolize the endlessness of your love. May the wine you are about to drink begin for you a draught of lifetime happiness sparkling in good cheer, sweet in taste and distilled with new dew in your single lives unified by love, freedom and gladness.

# The Triumph of Marriage

BY HERMAN KIEVAL

RABBI HERMAN KIEVAL is the author of plays in English and Hebrew published in Dramatics Around the Jewish Year. During the war years he served as a Chaplain in Hawaii, Okinawa, and Korea. He was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and is at present Rabbi of Temple Israel in Albany, New York. He is also the Jewish Religious Advisor for the New York State Department of Health.

## The Triumph of Marriage

### I

A few days ago there came to our house a most unusual announcement and invitation. Printed tastefully, in silver type, were these opening words: "After twenty-five years of blissfully happy marriage we feel we would like to celebrate our Silver Anniversary with our wonderful friends . . ." I was deeply moved by these sentiments expressed so freely in an age which generally holds deep emotions suspect.

I was reminded of an item I had seen in the bulletin of another synagogue. A husband sent in a note informing the synagogue office that he and his wife would be at services on the occasion of their wedding anniversary. He included this charming greeting to his wife:

Had God said to me,  
As He did to Solomon:  
Behold! to choose you are free  
One wish fulfilled—just one.  
One wish for your whole life through  
No matter big or small—  
I would have chosen you,  
And choosing you—had all!

If all this sounds sentimental, I "plead guilty."

Perhaps my title sounds a bit too aggressive to the ear for such sentimental thoughts. Why "triumph"? I have chosen this term advisedly because the institution of marriage has had to weather some mighty storms in our time. A historian or sociologist of the future searching the records of our culture might well conclude that marriage in the first half of the 20th century must have been a defeated, dying institution. The soaring divorce statistics—dramatized

by Hollywood, Reno and Las Vegas; the sordid, seamy picture of marriage as portrayed by the novel and the drama; the gargantuan satire heaped on marriage by comedians and cartoonists—all these cultural evidences would seem to justify such a gloomy outlook.

Fortunately, marriage is by no means a defeated, dying institution in our society. The overwhelming majority of men and women who enter marriage are “making a go of it”—on some level of success short of perfection. These marriages do not make headlines; they would be poison on the racy magazine racks. But they demonstrate that in the face of the many difficult challenges that marriage offers by its very nature, and in spite of corroding criticism from many areas of contemporary thought, the ancient and sacred institution of marriage is triumphing as it has always triumphed.

## II

What is the secret of this triumph? The true secret behind the tenacity and durability of marriage is that men and women need it more deeply than they know. One may jest (with Channing Pollock)—“Marriage is a great institution and no family should be without it.” Or one may wax lyrical (with Dorothy Dix)—“Compared with marriage, being born is a mere episode in our careers, and dying a trivial incident.” Or one may cite the Talmud—“No man is complete without a woman; no woman fulfilled without a man.” In any case, it is clear that problems connected with marriage cannot be approached fruitfully unless we remind ourselves of how complex and deep are the needs which lead to marriage in the first place. “What comes out of the deepest depths will hardly disappear in any shadows created by our modern restlessness.” (Prof. T. V. Smith.)

Yet, merely to recall the organic need of human beings

for marriage does not provide much of an answer to the poignant question: "How can we make a success of our marriage?" What, for example, does a counselor say to a starry-eyed young couple at a pre-marital conference? What do parents tell their children who are about to venture into life's greatest adventure? What is the "formula for success"?

The answer is, quite simply, that there is no formula! A "triumphant marriage" is the result of good "raw materials" from the standpoint of wholesome personality. "Only so far as a man is happily married to himself is he fit for married life." Even the best of raw materials needs hard work, endless patience, fortitude and courage—and then perhaps the marriage will merit God's richest blessings.

### III

Briefly, I should like to share with you what I consider to be some of the basic demands which "triumphant marriage requires of a man and woman.

The first is the demand of **TOTAL COMMITMENT**.

I usually ask a young couple about to be married what they think of the popular cliché—"Marriage is a 50-50 proposition." If they think this is a pretty accurate picture of the marital relationship, it is a fair indication that they are not prepared to meet the demand for total commitment. A "50-50 proposition" may be a very adequate arrangement for the business world; but it is catastrophic for the marriage relationship. In marriage, the husband or the wife, at any given moment, must be prepared to "invest" up to and including 100% of the time, energy, will power, ingenuity and whatever other sacrifices must be required by the demand for total commitment.

Marriage can never triumph when husband or wife figure "percentages" or "keep score" emotionally as to which partner is giving or taking more at any given moment!

Love is primarily giving, not taking! What is more, this total "investment" has to be made without any firm "guarantee" of a "return." Either party has to make this total commitment at any given moment, as an "act of faith."

The concept of "faith" is fundamental to "Triumphant Marriage." The Jewish word for marriage is *Kiddushin*. It means the "rites of Sanctification": Judaism teaches that marriage is the instrument by which men and women bring the dimension of holiness into their most intimate relationships. What does "holiness" mean in marriage? It means that the marital relationship is so supremely important that no sacrifice is too great to bring upon its altar. It means that a man and woman are prepared to "stake their life" in order to validate their faith in the importance of their marriage to them.

This does not mean that every bride—even less every groom—who walks down to the *chuppah* possesses perfect faith in his marriage. On the contrary, no party is 100% "sure" before marriage. It has been said that there has never been a groom who didn't have a few painful tugs of doubt at the last moment.

Faith never appears full-blown or full-grown; it is a tender plant that grows slowly with careful nurture. There are only discrete "pieces of faith," single "acts of faith"—all of which combine, like cells in an organism, to create a sturdy but always fallible product. The triumphant marriage is one in which partners have, by trial and error, through advance and retreat, built up sufficient experiences of faith in the supreme importance of their marriage to motivate their making a total commitment. And whenever we make a total commitment to any aspect of our life, we thereby sanctify it! The second basic demand of triumphant marriage is TOTAL ACCEPTANCE.

One of the most common and frustrating of all illusions is the notion that one person can make over another person

into his or her image. A new bride or husband is frequently guilty of this error. A young man marries a girl with the idea in his mind that he is going to "mold" her, Pygmalion-style, into just the kind of woman he considers ideal. The girl, on the other hand, is convinced that she can "reform" her new husband along the lines of her dreams. The institution of marriage permits one to play the role of a husband or wife, eventually of a father or mother—but never the role of God!

The measure of maturity is first to learn how to know and accept one's own self, with a proper appreciation of one's own strengths and an honest forgiveness of one's own weaknesses—at least unless something can be done about them. The second measure of maturity is to know and accept other people, especially one's own flesh and blood and one's own mate, with appreciation of their virtues and a forgiveness for their failings. Love, we have said already, is mostly giving, not taking. It is also mostly accepting and not expecting!

The late Rabbi Joshua Liebman wrote: "Self-confident men and women make of every human relationship something rich and rewarding. In marriage, they display the deep understanding that husband and wife have different needs, often go through strange and mysterious moods . . . Such persons have the wisdom to make of their homes oases in the desert, places of rest and refreshment where wounds that life inflicts are healed by affection."

This kind of healing affection can be given only by a man and woman who are prepared, through TOTAL COMMITMENT to marriage to give total ACCEPTANCE to each other!

What about techniques? What methods does one use to express this commitment and acceptance? The techniques are many and varied by which husband and wife dramatize their feelings of oneness. Yet a single word embraces them all: COMMUNICATION!

Communication is both spiritual and physical. One form cannot exist wholesomely without the other. For obvious reasons, we confine our discussion to the communication (or communion) of the spirit. This is accomplished primarily through words.

"Talking to each other is loving each other." Yes! Even when we have to speak in anger! Many a well-intentioned husband or wife inflicts excruciating torture on the mate by a "noble silence" when the heart is bursting with angry aggression. But "solitary confinement" is the worst of punishments! Well known is the classic joke of "well-married" people: "We even get to look forward to our arguments; the making up afterward is so nice!"

A specialist in the field of human conversation and communication explains why: (are you angry at me?) then "Accept my challenge to a verbal fight. When we talk it out together we turn part of our anger and aggression into the love of communication. Only the free expression of anger and resentment liberates us from our hidden hatred . . . In the very act of conversing with me, you can no longer hate me . . . The words you fling at my head instead of stones contain something of love of civilization and the ways of civilized, mature people." (Dr. Joost Meerloo.) Expressing our anger is, in great part, conquering it. Expressing our love is growing more and more into our love.

"Come let us reason together" saith the Lord to His beloved Israel, though His anger is kindled at their faithlessness. These words of the prophet Isaiah might well be posted in every home. "Come, let us reason together!" is the message of our loving God to every married couple.

#### IV

Here then are a few insights into the secret of "Triumphant Marriage" — COMMITMENT, ACCEPTANCE, COMMUNICATION. This is no formula; for human relationships are too

subtle, too dynamic ever to lend themselves to scientific formulations, least of all the most intimate of all relationships. "Marriage is the harbor of human life . . . it is Home!" (Thomas Paine.)

The occasion calls for sentiment, not science; for poetry, not prose. Let us therefore close with the insight of the poet who feels more deeply than any scientist:

\*Then Almitra spoke again and said  
And What of Marriage, master?  
You were born together, and together you shall be for-  
evermore . . .  
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter  
your days.  
Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.  
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,  
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.  
Love one another, but make not a bond of love:  
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your  
souls.  
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.  
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same  
loaf.  
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of  
you be alone,  
Even as the strings of a lute are alone they quiver with the  
same music.  
Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.  
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.  
And stand together yet not too near together:  
For the pillars of the Temple stand apart,  
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's  
shadow.

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# The Jewish Conception of Happiness

BY MAX NUSSBAUM

RABBI MAX NUSSBAUM is the author of *The Philosophy of Max Adler* and *The Nationalism of Yehudah Halevi*. Educated in Germany at the Breslau Jewish Theological Seminary and the University of Würzburg; served as Rabbi of the Great Jewish Congregation of Berlin. He arrived in the United States in 1940, and since 1942 he has been Rabbi of Temple Israel in Hollywood, California.

## The Jewish Conception of Happiness

Judaism is a way of life and, as such, it encompasses the whole of human existence. The ceremonies of our Tradition, which translate Judaism into meaningful forms, address themselves, therefore, to the individual and simultaneously to his relationship with God, our own people, and mankind as a whole.

The marriage ceremony is no exception. As such, it is a most intimate and personal affair. In it, Judaism stresses the value of happiness. We are aware of the fact that marriage is an attempt by society to guide the individual toward the achievement of happiness. Judaism sanctions the goal, but emphasizes its own approach to it. Our Tradition believes that the way to go after happiness is not to labor for it in a direct way, but to pledge oneself to adhere to certain values which in turn will bring one—indirectly, but surely—to the hoped-for aim. Judaism has therefore, set up four stepping stones which it displays to every wedding couple, inviting the two young people to climb over them to the desired goal.

The first one, serving as the foundation stone, is the value of love and personal affection. And nowhere in the poetry of human civilization has it been described in loftier words or more touching terms than in the "Song of Songs" (8:7): "Many waters cannot quench love, Neither can the floods drown it; If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, He would utterly be contemned." Nowhere else has the identification of two young people been so tenderly phrased as in "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine, That feedeth among the lilies." . . . "For,

lo, the winter is past, The rain is over and gone; The flowers appear on the earth; The time of singing is come, And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, And the vines in blossom give forth their fragrance. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." (*SONG OF SONGS*, 6:3; 2:11-13.) It does not happen by chance that this book has given lavishly of its images to the titles of so many motion pictures . . .

But having said that, Judaism doesn't stop at this point. It is a challenging and demanding religion. And personal love by itself, the foundation stone though it be, is not enough. It, therefore, gently reminds a young couple of the role of God in their personal lives. How have the two of them met? Was it a chance happening via a blind date or via the services of a mutual friend? Our forefathers had a word for all this; they called it *Hashgacha*—that providential law that unites people in marriage and very often uses intricate ways and modern devices to achieve its goal. This being the case, Judaism asks the two of them to take, as it were, God with them, make Him a part of their hearts and minds, and be guided by immovable faith in His providential care. Our Tradition put it succinctly and beautifully into one Hebrew line, "No man without woman, no woman without man, and neither without God."

Even so, we haven't reached the point of actual fulfillment. They may be deeply in love with one another and have faith in God without tapping the third source of human happiness—the one of belongingness. Quite aside from the Jewish viewpoint—that Judaism could not possibly survive without the loyalty of generations to its eternal principles—one cannot live normally and integrate one's personality into our present-day society without the personal identification with the group from which one comes. The famous psychiatrist, Professor Jung, said once—in looking back upon many years of treating patients of all re-

ligious persuasions—in his memoirs, “those who ‘belonged’ didn’t have to come to me, and the others, I never cured.”

Judaism, therefore, bids those standing under the chuppah to furnish their living room with things Jewish as carefully as they would plan the color scheme in the normal process of building a home: the Jewish painting on the wall, the Jewish book on the shelf, the Jewish record on the phonograph, the membership in the synagogue, and the participation and activities in behalf of the welfare of our people.

Lastly, and coming closer to the climax, Judaism challenges the two young people in love with one another, believing in God and identifying themselves with the Jewish people, to adhere to those supreme values in human life which are beyond race and creed and color—the ultimate values of decency and fairness, of justice and loving kindness, of mercy and peace among men. To belong to those who give of their energy and devotion, time and substance, to ideals which make of America a better land, and of the world a better place in which to live—this is the eternal challenge of Judaism, and of our holidays, customs, ceremonies, and of the chuppah itself.

## II

This whole philosophy sketched above may be phrased differently: The wedding ceremony is the most important moment in the lives of the young couple, because until now they were individuals thinking of themselves separately as “I”—and even marching into this very ceremony through two separate doors—but the minute they exchange rings, they will be thinking in terms of “we.” This “we” means their complete identification with one another.

Judaism has always stressed the importance of this “we.” It expects and demands it. However, it enlarges the circle of the “we” to include the element of God, the Jewish peo-

ple, and mankind. Under the chuppah there stand, not only the bride and the bridegroom, but also our three invisible, but yet so ever-present partners: Divinity, Peoplehood, and Humanity. That this is the inner meaning of the Jewish wedding ceremony can be easily gauged from the so-called "Seven Blessings" which are traditionally recited by the rabbi or sung by the cantor. Here, the Prayer Book praises God for having created the individual (*Adam*), and more specifically for having created him in His image. It passes from there to the exultation of God as the one who causes Zion to rejoice in her children, and thence to the exultation of the bride and bridegroom with one another. And as if to sum up for us the whole Jewish way of life, which covers the entire gamut of existence, it climaxes in the following words: "Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe Who hast created joy and rejoicing, bridegroom and bride, mirth and exaltation, pleasure and delight, love and brotherhood, peace and friendship." To this, in the Liberal Ritual, the Rabbi adds, wisely I believe, the words: "May they (bride and bridegroom) be worthy to build a house in Israel for praise and for glory, and may there be peace in their home, and satisfaction and quietude in their hearts, and may they live to see the consolation of Israel and the redemption of the world." Here, then, is the enumeration of the whole system of values with which the two partners are bidden to identify themselves, and which alone is the safe road leading toward happiness.

### III

There is even more to it. The Jewish conception of happiness expresses itself, not only in the liturgy, the lyrics of the ceremony, but in the very form of the chuppah itself. Actually the whole ceremony is nothing but a pageantry for the dramatization of the word "happiness," and

the chuppah itself only the stage on which the play is produced. But as the design of the stage sets the mood for a scene and simultaneously interprets it, so does the chuppah function in the dual capacity of providing both the setting for and the symbol of our Jewish way of life.

I have, therefore, for many years liked to think of the four pillars of the chuppah as standing for the four important principles: *Ahava*—Personal Love; *Hashgacha*—Divine Providence; *Torah*—Belongingness to a People and its Culture; and *Achava*—the Brotherhood of Man. The four pillars, held together by the flat roof, indicate the single unit of a house and, in turn, the indivisible entity of society. Through all this Judaism says to a couple about to be married that if they will build the structure of their new home on these four foundations, their newly married life will remain steadfast throughout the years to come.

When at the end of a Jewish wedding ceremony the Rabbi utters the two wonderful words of *Mazel Tov*, they actually represent a prayer—the shortest one in our Tradition—that the two young people standing before him, may—through identification with one another and with God; with the Jewish people and with mankind—achieve their sought-for goal of happiness. Thus is the “leitmotif” of the Jewish wedding ceremony carried, circle-like, to its logical conclusion.

# The Jewish Understanding of Sex

BY J. HAROLD ROMIROWSKY

RABBI J. HAROLD ROMIROWSKY, *educator, youth leader, family counselor. He was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, is the Rabbi of the Oxford Circle Jewish Community Center, vice-president of the Rabbinical Assembly Branch, and Chaplain of Deborah Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

## The Jewish Understanding of Sex

I always like to think of God as the author of a symphony of love. When bride and groom stand under the wedding canopy and take their marriage vows, they begin to play back to God the symphony of love which he has created.

Young people very often ask, "What is the Jewish concept of love and marriage?" "What is the Jewish understanding of sex?"

An illustration once given by Dr. Leo Jung, who tells of an item which appeared in "Paris," a famous British weekly, may serve us as a guide to the answers to these basic questions. The magazine offered a prize to anyone who would give the briefest and wittiest answers to these three questions:

1. Best advice to people who have fallen in love.
2. Best advice to people about to marry.
3. Best advice to a woman who wishes to retain her husband's love.

One lady won the prize. These were her answers:

1. Best advice to people who have fallen in love—"Fall out!"
2. Best advice to people about to marry—"Don't!"
3. Best advice to a woman who wishes to retain the love of her husband—"Feed the brute!"

From the woman's replies, it is perfectly obvious that she was completely uninformed on the fundamental laws and precepts of marriage as set forth in our Jewish tradition.

Firstly, she said, "Fall out of love." Judaism teaches us that love is the basic ingredient to the success of any

marriage. The couple that realizes that their relationship must be one of caring intensely for the other, a giving and doing selflessly for one another, will understand that in order to make their marriage divine, the marriage relationship must not be a mere gratification of animal instinct.

The very beginning of the Bible, in the Book of Genesis, reveals the attitude of the Jew. In relating the details of God's creation of man, the Bible says, "And the Lord said it is not good for man to dwell alone. I will make a helpmate for him." In other words, God created woman in such a way that she should be sought as a loving companion by man. God endowed man and woman with the qualities which would produce such a feeling of love. These feelings of love are not only natural but also divine, and seek their full expression through the marriage relation. Our tradition looks on the love relationship as a high adventure of the human spirit, an opportunity for a man and a woman to make a oneness of their separateness; confirm each other in strength, and support each other in weakness, be schooled in unselfishness and compassion, and help to hand on from their generation to the next the sacred things of their marriage.

In the Biblical story of Isaac and Rebecca in the Book of Genesis, we find this concept reflected. The Bible tells us that Isaac brought Rebecca into his mother's tent, took her into marriage *and then* loved her, and was comforted by his mother. Samson Raphael Hirsch in his commentary emphasizes the position of the verb in this verse—where love comes *after* marriage. However important it is that love shall precede marriage, it is far more important that it shall continue *even after* marriage.

Secondly, the woman in the illustration said, "Don't marry." The Jew, however, is commanded to marry. To the Jew, celibacy is not only unnatural but definitely contrary to the law of God which commanded man and woman

"to be fruitful and multiply." "And He created the earth—not a waste—He formed it to be inhabited." Judaism holds it to be a man's duty to marry and to rear children. It views voluntary abstinence from marriage as a triple sin—against the health of body, the fulfillment of soul, and the welfare of society. The Jewish man or woman unmarried is considered as a half person—*plag gufa*, or half body. Only in marriage can man and woman fully realize themselves—"The unmarried lives without joy, without blessings, and without goodness."

The sages knew that "a woman finds peace of mind only in her husband's house," and that "often more than man wants to marry, the woman desires to be taken to wife." The propagation of the species was placed as the primary purpose of marriage; and the Talmudic law states that a man is obligated to have a prescribed minimum of children in order to fulfill this precept—one son and one daughter. It is noteworthy that although the propagation of children is the basic goal of marriage, the Halacha teaches that weak, old, and sterile people should marry, even when there is no possibility of children being born to them. Even when a married man and woman are incapable of bearing children, Jewish law does not interfere with, but rather endorses the companionship aspect of marriage. This is in consonance with what a modern sociologist recorded: "Sex exists not only for the propagation of the race, but the increase of individual human happiness."

Eighteen is considered the right age for a man to marry; a girl should be married upon reaching maturity. The rabbis looked askance upon those who waited too long before assuming family obligations. A young scholar was once dismissed by his teacher because he was not married, with the retort, "Don't visit me again until you have taken a wife." Bachelors were regarded with misgiving, had no social standing in the traditional Jewish community,

and were barred from synagogue honors. As a matter of fact, we know that in some places, during the middle ages, no man over twenty or under sixty was permitted at all to reside without a wife. As a result, prostitution was practically unknown in Jewish life from very early times.

Judaism not only says that sex experience must be sacred, romantic, and deeply personal, but it must also, to fulfill its function of glorifying God in our bodies, be socially responsible. Sex is our link to the past and our link to the future, and no Jewish man or woman should enter into it without a deep and lasting sense of the sheer wonder of ongoing life. Our years on this earth are few and fleeting, a mere "moment between sun and frost." Nevertheless, we are part of an endless chain of life, and we are responsible to God and to man to see that that chain does not break at our link, nor is life wasted because of our indifference, selfishness, or lack of faith. In the mystery of sex is hidden the mystery of new life, and only the most shallow soul can be careless before that mystery. This is expressed quite movingly during the marriage ceremony when the bride is brought partway down the aisle by her parents, to be met by her groom who leads her to the *Chuppah*. This symbolizes the passing of one generation from the stage of life; a generation that has reared its children and brought new life and hope to this old universe. But the wonder of ongoing life can no longer be the trust of that older generation. In the physical sense, the younger generation which forms the new link to the future must take over this responsibility. In every wedding ceremony there is a shift of responsibility from one generation to another, including the responsibility for new life. We glorify God when we hold this mystery of new life in awe and in holiness.

And finally, the prize winning adviser cautioned her

reader to "feed the brute." If you know Jewish housewives, they feed their husbands, but they do not think of them as brutes. Judaism has painstakingly portrayed the ideal in marriage to show a mutual and loving understanding between man and wife to be the cornerstone of marriage. All through the ages, the respect and esteem with which the wife and mother is held has ever been the envy of all neighboring peoples. It is a religious injunction which forbids sexual relations during a woman's menstrual period and for a time thereafter. Medical knowledge of later years and of modern times, as well as psychiatry of today, have come to confirm the wisdom and the soundness of such a practice.

Sex for the Jew is romantic. The sages emphasize the importance of the love play and admonish the husband to woo his wife. In the summary of Maimonides, "The sexual union should be consummated only out of desire and as the result of the joy of the husband and wife." In another concept Maimonides wrote, "He must not approach her when he thinks of another woman and certainly not when he is under the influence of alcohol or while they are quarreling, and hatred divides them. He must not approach her against her will or force her to submit to him out of fear."

The fact that Jewish law stressed the joy of love was part of a powerful antidote against sexual hypocrisy and puritanism. Judaism does not countenance a double standard of sexual morality. Chastity is expected of the man no less than of the woman.

This frank recognition of the sex impulse in life brought about an emphasis in Jewish teaching on desirability of early marriage. Sex is not a forbidden topic to the Jew. It is part of life; something that is good, clean, and holy. The Jewish child was brought up from early childhood with a clear knowledge of the physical facts of birth and marriage, as well as their spiritual aspect. No attempt was

made to shield the youngster from the knowledge of any part of life, since in his studies the child was exposed to a free and frank commentary upon the sexual aspect of living. The Jewish sages and teachers described the problems of sex freely and intelligently.

The fact that the Rabbis interpreted the beautiful "Song of Songs" as a symbolism of the mutual attachment of Israel and God, attests to their profound esteem of sensuous love. The sages symbolically conceive of God's love for Israel as the intoxication of a youth with the charms of his beloved and of Israel's attachment to God as the passionate longing of the betrothed for her promised one. The Prophets often describe the relation between God and Israel symbolically as a marriage tie or covenant, and constantly emphasize the element of love, and the impossibility of a husband forgetting the wife of his youth, a figure of speech which reflects the high conception of the marital tie.

The Pentateuch does not prohibit polygamy since it is well known that the Kings, David and Solomon, had many wives in the manner of the oriental kings. However, even during earlier times monogamy was considered the ideal marriage, as is evident from the very symbolism used by the prophets in comparing the relation of God to Israel and the bond uniting God and Israel as symbolic of marriage. This same ideal was reflected in the beautiful chapter in the Book of Proverbs, "A Woman of Valor." The sages and Jewish commentators were students of life as well as of the Torah. They knew what goes into the making of a happy marriage. Our rabbinic commentaries emphasize that love is the primary prerequisite for marital happiness.

To prevent man from being a brute, we are specifically commanded against entering into certain definitely prescribed relationships. "Blessed art Thou O Lord our God, King of the Universe Who has sanctified us by Thy com-

mandments and has given us a commandment concerning forbidden marriages . . ." is the opening blessing in the traditional wedding ceremony. The words "forbidden" and "permitted" mean forbidden by God and permitted by God. These words of the benediction which the bride and groom attest to at their wedding ceremony indicate to us that, according to Scripture, there are some categories of relatives who are forbidden to marry, and some who are permitted, depending on the degree of relationship.

The Jewish understanding of sex involves at the same time both individual and social responsibilities. Dr. Louis M. Epstein in his introduction to *Marriage Laws in the Bible and the Talmud* bears out this contention:

\*"Of all human relations, paradoxically enough, the marriage relation is at once the most private and the most public. On the one hand, society recognizes the inviolable privacy of the home and affords it certain measures of protection against outside interference; but on the other, it takes unto itself the right to interfere in that privacy by setting up rigid laws restricting the individuals in choosing their mates for the establishment of a home. And that society of which we think in this connection is not only the contemporary group, but all generations of ancestry seem to rise from their graves to tell brides and grooms what they may do and what they may not."

"Nowhere as in the law of marriage can one find a standard of action that so faithfully preserves the traditions of all past ages, and nowhere as in marriage does group conscience so dominate the individual. This is certainly true of the marriage laws of the Jewish people."

Let us, therefore, learn to accept ourselves in all dimensions of our being, and let us use the flesh as well as the spirit to sanctify our union, both for the mutual hap-

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<sup>\*</sup>Reprinted by permission of the publishers, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass.

piness of the partners in marriage, and for the creation of new life upon this earth.

The achievement of physical adjustment, the acceptance of our bodies as well as of our spirits, are instruments given to us by God to be used for blessing and fulfillment in the sacred circle of the Jewish family.



# The Jewish View of Marriage

BY EUGENE MIHALY

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## The Jewish View of Marriage

Marriage is wholesome fulfillment, a sacred bond, an inherent good, a divine command. “He who has no wife is not a man for does not Scripture say ‘male and female created He them . . . and called *their* name Adam.’” (Yeb. 63a). “God waits impatiently for man to marry.” (Kid. 29b). Since creation “He sits and arranges marriages” (Gen. Rab. LXVIII.4) and is a witness at the wedding (Mal. 2.4; Git. 90b). “One who does not marry dwells without joy, without blessing, without goodness . . . without peace,” (Yeb. 62b); he is without possessions (Ned. 41a); he is in constant sin and God forsakes him (Pes. 113a; Kid. 29b). The sins of man are forgiven at marriage (Yeb. 66b), and (Eben ha-Ezer LXI.1); Elijah kisses him and God loves him (Derech Eretz I). The groom and the attendants are freed from the observance of all ritual commandments “for one who is busy with the performance of a divine command is free from all others.” (Suk. 25b). “This is the law: A man shall first take unto himself a wife and then study Torah.” (Kid. 29b). The high priest was not to perform the atonement rites on Yom Kippur unless he had a wife (Mishnah Yoma I.1; cf. Yer. Yoma I.1 end, Babli Yoma 13a). Marriage in the Jewish view is the good, the normal, the ideal. For rabbi or layman, for high priest or scholar or saint. “No man without a wife, neither a woman without a husband, nor both of them without God.” (Gen. Rab. VIII.9).

Marriage is a step in the unfoldment of *homo religiosus*. It represents man’s capacity to live beyond himself in perfect union with another. The ideal is to transcend oneself

so that the "I" encompasses the married partner in mutual love. It is a significant step in the lifelong religious task of an ever-expanding circumference of self-investment. However, just as the ultimate in human fulfillment "Love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19.18) is attainable only if one completes the verse and submits to the authority "I am the Lord" (*ibid.*), so with the man-woman relationship. By investing the marriage union with sanctity and giving it divine authority, Judaism has decreed that husband and wife are not tools or means or vehicles for one another.

"One who loves his wife as himself and honors her more than himself . . . concerning him does Scripture say 'And thou shalt know that there is peace in thy tent.'" (Yeb. 62b; Sanh. 76b; Yad, Hil. Ishuth XV.19). "Man should be ever mindful of the honor of his wife for she is responsible for all the blessings found in his household." A man must not cause his wife to weep for God counts her tears (B.M. 59a; Ket. 62a). One should do for himself less but for his wife more than circumstance permits (Hul. 84b). Strive to fulfill your wife's wishes for it is equivalent to doing God's will (Kallah II). "If your wife is small bend down and listen to her" (B.M. 59a). "Everything has its substitute except the wife of one's youth" (Ruth Rab. I). If one's wife dies in his lifetime, the world turns into darkness, his steps are shortened; his wisdom diminishes, it is as if he were present at the destruction of the temple. "A husband's death is felt by none but his wife; a wife's death is felt by none but her husband" (Sanh. 22a-b).

The wife does not resign her individuality in marriage. The tendency writ large in Judaism is that the marital bond is a voluntary union of two equals who find completion and wholesome fulfillment in each other. The man and woman strive not for having, but to achieve greater being, a fuller self-realization within the marital state. Thus Judaism teaches that marriage can take place only by mutual

consent (Kid. 2b; Yad, Hil. Ishuth IV.1; Eben ha-Ezer XLII.1). In an age when child marriage was the common practice, the sages ordained: "It is forbidden for a man to betroth his minor daughter until she attains her majority and says, 'I love this man.'" (Kid. 41a). "The groom may not enter the nuptial chamber without the bride's permission" (Lev. Rab. IX.6). The *halacha* as summarized by Maimonides is, "not to have sexual intercourse while either is intoxicated, or sluggish, or in mourning; nor when she be asleep, nor by overpowering her but with the consent and happy mood of both" (Hil. Deoth V.5; cf. Eru. 100b; Hil. Ishruth XV.17; Hil. Isurei Biah XXI.12).

The sexual aspect of marriage is not something hidden, or obscene, or under a shadow of sin and shame, but a desired end in itself—the culmination of a loving relationship in which both partners have an equal share and find mutual satisfaction. The sex act is not condoned or given a compromised legitimacy by the necessity to propagate the race. On the contrary, the beauty, the character, the health of the offspring is influenced by the nature of the sexual relations. Cohabitation, without the spiritual factors of love and concern for one another is decried as immoral with evil consequences. "He who coerces his wife will produce unworthy children." (Eru. 100b). One must not live with his wife if his intention is to divorce her and if a woman thinks of another man when she is with her husband. Such a relationship is in the category of adultery (Yeb. 37b; Git. 90a; Yad, Hil. Isurei Biah XXI.12). The Talmud cites the homely proverb: "Let not a man drink from this cup while his eyes are attracted by another." (Ned. 20b).

The Rabbis thus encourage play and psychological preparation prior to the sex act promising that he who shows concern for his wife's sexual gratification will be granted sons and beautiful children as a reward (Ned. 20b; Niddah

31a-b; Kallah I and II; Yad, Hil. Ishuth XV.17). All forms of sex play between husband and wife are considered legitimate and are permitted as long as the aim is a greater natural fulfillment (Ned. 20b; Yeb. 34b; Sanh. 85b; Hil. Isurei Biah XXI.12; Hil. Ishuth XV.17; Eben ha-Ezer XXV.2). The ideal is that the sex act be not perfunctory and dutiful but that the experience be as exciting and fresh as the first union on the wedding night (Statement of Rabbi Meir in Niddah 31b). The wife is urged to use cosmetics and wear ornaments so that she be attractive to her husband not only in her youth but also in old age (M.K. 9b). The leading Rabbi of the 13th century, Meir of Rothenburg, considered it of sufficient importance to state, "Let a curse descend upon a woman who has a husband and does not strive to be attractive." (*Responsa*, Prague, 199)

Nor is sex activity to cease after the woman's change of life. The husband fulfills his conjugal duties even if his wife be sterile or if she suffer from some other illness which makes conception impossible. (Eben ha-Ezer XXIII.2). Even a man who has never fulfilled the commandment to be "fruitful and multiply" may marry a woman incapable of bearing children (Yad, Hil. Ishuth IV.10; Isserles on Eben ha-Ezer I.3). Furthermore, if the woman's life is in danger or if the health of the child be jeopardized, or if there be negative hereditary or environmental factors, the rabbis not only permit but in some instances insist on contraceptive measures (See Responsum of Z. Lauterbach, CCAR *Yearbook*, Vol. XXVII, 1927). Under no circumstances, however, did the rabbis teach abstention. Procreation is undoubtedly a fulfillment in marriage, but the love and companionship is no less a primary purpose. Eve was created to be a "helpmate" to Adam since "it is not good for man to be alone" and only later were they commanded "to be fruitful and multiply."

The major tendency in Judaism is to create a single stand-

ard for husband and wife and to consider the woman an equal partner in the marriage relation. This is the underlying theme which determines the attitude of developing tradition toward polygamy, toward the reciprocal duties of man and wife, toward divorce and toward the wife's property rights.

The idyllic relationship of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as pictured in the creation narrative sets the pattern for future striving and attainment. The traditional marriage service alludes to that original state of one man and one woman in all creation as the ideal in every marriage (Ket. 8a, sixth blessing). The many provisions in the Pentateuch which presuppose monogamy (see for ex. Deut. 20.7; 24.5; 25.5-11), the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs, the Books of Tobit and Judith, the entire framework of Talmudic Literature which reports no instance of polygamous practice among the Tannaim or Amoraim and the countless Midrashic statements based on monogamy would certainly indicate that Rabbi Gershom merely gave legal expression to a practice and ideal as old as Judaism itself when he established monogamy as the law. Judaism reluctantly tolerated polygamy until the end of the tenth century but regarded it as an evil which could not be totally eradicated in the prevailing historic situation. There is much evidence which supports the conclusion that "It was the relapse into polygamy which Judaism owed to external influences while its acceptance of monogamy had been an original, not an acquired virtue." (L. Abrahams, *Jewish Life in the Middle Ages*, p. 118).

Judaism's basic striving may be discerned in the following provisions. The husband is obliged to provide for his wife's sustenance and thus has a claim on her earnings. She may, if she chooses, claim the right of self-support and retain her income. However, the husband is not granted this alternative (Ket. 58a, 63a, 107b: B.K. 8b; Yad, Hil.

Ishuth XII.4 and Eben ha-Ezer LXIX.4). The husband has no right to mortgage or sell the wife's property and if he does so, the transactions are invalid (B.B. 49b-50a; Mishnah Git. V.6, Git. 58b; Ket. 79b-80a; Yeb. 66b; Tur Hoshen Mishpat 90 and Eben ha-Ezer 96). To protect the woman, some of the authorities denied her permission to sell or give her property to her husband, but he may transfer his belongings to her (B.B. 49b, 51a).

The husband must provide his wife with food, clothing, shelter, ornaments and pocket money in accordance with his means (Yad, Hil. Ishuth XII.2). The general rule in this regard is that "the wife ascends with her husband but does not descend with him" (Ket. 48b, 61a). She is entitled to all the advantages of his status without losing those she enjoyed in her parental home. If the husband deserted his wife without making provision for her support, the court is empowered to grant her alimony from his property (Ket. 48b, 107a; Eben ha-Ezer LXX.5) and she is given monthly allotments in order to save her the embarrassment of appearing before the authorities more often than necessary (Eben ha-Ezer XCIII.32).

Both husband and wife have a right to insist that their parents-in-law or other relatives do not visit their home if such visits disturb the peace of the household. However, neither may deny each other permission to call on his parents or other members of the family (Hil. Ishuth XIII.14). The choice of a new place of residence or a new profession is subject to the consent of both husband and wife. With some limitation, he cannot compel her to accompany him to a distant city or locality and if sufficiently grievous the court will consider it a valid ground for divorce (Ket. 110b; Yad, Hil. Ishuth XIII.16).

The woman can appeal to the court for divorce if the marriage took place under false pretenses, if he is immoral, if his profession is intolerable to her, or if they are sexually

incompatible; if he embarrasses her, or denies her entry to their home, if his demands are such that her reputation would be blemished, if he angers easily and insults her or beats her or leaves her for an unreasonable length of time (Hil. Ishuth XIII.16-XIV.2; Eben ha-Ezer 154). The grounds on which a man can divorce his wife were no less and in some instances even more liberal. Rabbi Akiba would permit divorce if "another woman appeared more attractive to him" (Git. 90a). It must be noted, however, that though the divorce laws were most liberal, there was always strong moral and societal pressure against the dissolution of a marriage, making divorce a rare phenomenon in Jewish life throughout the ages. "The altar sheds tears over him who divorces his first wife . . . the Lord hates sending away" (Git. 90b) was ever the predominant attitude. But true to its basic spirit, Judaism honestly and forthrightly admits that in spite of all effort some marriages lack the love, the care, the mutual sympathy which give them sanctity and are best dissolved. To punish the partners in an impossible marriage and to deny them the opportunity for fulfillment with more suitable mates would be inconceivable within Judaism.

We must indeed be grateful to the psychiatrist, the sociologist, the anthropologist, who have done much to dispel the mood of guilt which the dominant religious thought induces. However, who but the religionist rooted in Jewish tradition can speak meaningfully and effectively to that universal aspect of man which seeks authority beyond itself? Who, if not the rabbi, shall proclaim the potential wholesomeness and goodness of all life with the authority of "thus saith the Lord." Who but the dedicated Jew shall view man not obliquely, or under a shadow, but directly, openly, and then say, "You shall love the Lord with *all* your inclinations" (Mishnah Berachoth IX.5). Who,

if not the rabbi, will bring the deep dimension of religion to marriage, to the healthy sexual fulfillment of wife and husband, to the equality and mutuality of the marriage partners and say with the authority of three thousand years of searching and finding, "And the Lord saw and it was good."



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**SEVEN TIMES BLESSED**



## SEVEN TIMES BLESSED

At the wonderful moment when a man and a woman are united in the "holiness of marriage," Judaism invokes "seven blessings" upon them. These cover the whole of Israel's history, from the first miracle of Creation to the miracle of the rebirth of the Messianic Era in the rededication of the Jewish State of Israel.

God created man, and then out of man He created the "perpetual fabric" which is woman, so that mankind might endure. This is emphasized in the fourth of the "seven blessings" which reads: "Blessed art Thou O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast made man in thine own image, after Thy likeness and hast prepared unto him out of his very self a perpetual fabric. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Creator of man." Out of this "perpetual fabric" have been fashioned our families which are so vital for the perpetuation of mankind.

The general trend in our own day is for our families to become less and less centered in the scheme of social living. Families are becoming less and less integrated as children believe themselves independent of their parents who in turn do nothing about cementing family ties and traditions. But normally in the Jewish home, the joy of family gatherings, the respect of children for their parents, and the family spirit itself, fortunately still continue to be an inherent part of the Jewish makeup. Jews have always been aware of the unique value of the family not only for the development of the human personality, but for the survival of the individual within the framework of the Jewish people. On the one hand, the Jewish people itself

is regarded traditionally as the outgrowth of a single family —the Family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. On the other hand, the Jewish people depends for its creative survival on the maintenance of Judaism within the family unit.

The fostering of a strong and happy family life is still the basis for hope in the future well-being of our society. The family circle continues to be the place where children and adults receive the necessary courage and sustenance which they need for their bodies as well as their spirits. It is the social agency where warmth and devotion initially help in the development of human personality, which in turn makes for a better community and a better world. It is the place from which powerful influences for good can be transferred to succeeding generations. Judaism has nourished the family through its traditions and customs. It has exercised a creative influence on the home through its religious emphasis on the value of life and its teachings of faith in God as the protecting Father of all mankind. "God dwells in a pure and loving home" (Kid. 71). Jewish law and custom have guarded the sanctity of the home, the blessedness of the household, which in turn have preserved our society and guaranteed the upbuilding of mankind. The purity and sanctity of the family was always carefully guarded so that it became the bulwark of moral and social strength of the Jews down through the ages. The moral atmosphere of the family was always kept pure and fresh through the celebration of the religious ceremonies; the observance of the Sabbath and Festivals; the rites and institutions surrounding birth, Bar Mitzvah, Confirmation, marriage and death. The observance of the dietary laws, the Seder, the lighting of the Chanukah candles; grace before and after meals, the sanctification of the Sabbath with the lighting of the candles and the *Kid-dush*, all helped to unite the members of the family. The Synagogue has been for the Jew a pillar of strength and

a powerful ally for the home and family. The religious school, the rabbi as preacher, teacher and friend are additional influential resources for family fusion and mutual understanding. Law and Prophets, Midrash and Talmud, Psalmists and Saints again and again emphasize the importance of the family.

Sociologists and psychologists have given much attention to the relationships between teacher and pupil and employer and employee. However, the uncertain relationships between the members of family groups are today our greatest concern and deserve our greatest attention. The achievement of family solidarity will require a great deal of effort from us. We must be very understanding of our families because we often see the unpolished side of our kin. We cannot command family warmth and love. It must be cultivated to allow it to grow. Each family must fulfill its requirements in its own way. "All happy families resemble one another, every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." While it is, indeed, difficult to command the heart we can learn to cultivate the love we find within our family group when we have learned to understand others. We can understand others only if we know ourselves. Too many of us pursue the search for happiness outside our family groups, when in reality it is to be found in great abundance close to our homes. This is illustrated by the story of the artist who had become increasingly dissatisfied with his work. He was anxious to paint the most beautiful thing in the world, and he left his home in search for that thing. He travelled far and wide to many foreign countries of the world. He saw much that was beautiful, but not what he was looking for. One day he stopped a bride on her way to her wedding. "Tell me," he said to the radiant young girl, "what is the most beautiful thing in the world?"

"Love," she answered, without any hesitation. The artist

tried to paint love, but he was disappointed. He couldn't paint love. He went on his way.

He then came upon a soldier returning weary from war. "Soldier," he asked, "what is the most beautiful thing in the world?"

"Peace," the soldier replied as he hurried on. Again the artist was disappointed. He could not paint peace. He continued on his search.

A priest in the churchyard caught his attention. Surely here he would find the true answer to his prayers. But he was not satisfied with the priest's answer either, because the priest answered simply: "Faith is the most beautiful thing in the world." How could one paint a picture of faith? The artist felt that he could not.

Weary and despondent, the artist returned to his home. Then, when his wife greeted him, he found the love of which the bride had spoken. All about him in his home was the feeling of serene peacefulness that the soldier thought so beautiful, and the faith recommended by the priest was abundant in the loving eyes of his children.

Here indeed was the subject for his painting. The most beautiful thing in the world was his own family . . .

# The Jewish Family

BY HENRY E. KAGAN

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## The Jewish Family

In order to understand the Jewish family life in modern society it is essential that we consider the American family pattern of which it is a part and the major changes that have been taking place in this family pattern since the turn of the century.

The first of the changes we observe is that the family has grown smaller. The large, rural, stationary family has been replaced by the small, urban, mobile family. Formerly, family relationships extended beyond the immediate family to two or three related families. Today, however, the family involves primarily a husband, wife, and children, with ever-decreasing reference to in-laws, grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. We do not marry into the family, we marry out of the family.

A second change characteristic of the modern family is in its democratization. A defined and accepted hierarchy of paternal authority has given way to greater equality between the members. This new individualistic structure of the mobile nuclear family has weakness and strength. It makes for greater democracy by emphasizing performance instead of status, but its fewer members feel less secure, lack the warmth of kinfolk and are more tense because of greater reliance upon each other for emotional satisfaction.

A third notable change is in the attitude toward the value of marriage. In part, this change is a result of the emphasis of our democratic culture on the rights of the individual and its hesitancy to endorse any group living. Consequently, the *arranged* marriage, preserving family prestige and marriages limited by other group loyalty con-

siderations, are being replaced by individual choice. Romantic love is exalted as a sound basis for the selection of the mate and the test now of a successful marriage is not its over-all function, but the *personal* happiness of its members. This individualistic attitude has both strength and weakness. It makes for greater self-development and supports mobility from one class into another, but it also encourages self-indulgence and thus frequent resort to divorce. Passionate romance, despite its vulgarization by the commercial purveyors of glamor, is a necessary catalyst, but it is ephemeral. By itself, it does not have the lasting qualities of mature love which realistic marriage requires.

These changes in family structure have had a marked effect on father, mother, and child. The urban middle class man's drive for occupational success has become so consuming that he has had little time left for concentration on marital relationships. A product of the small family, his emotional attachment to his parents has been intensified, especially with his mother. "Momism," or emotional immaturity growing out of this relationship, influences his selection of a mate in marriage. Frequently what he seeks is a substitute for his own mother, not a wife, and, therefore, he often refuses to accept family responsibility, fears the competition of his own children or becomes compulsively promiscuous to compensate for masculine inadequacy. The passing of the patriarchal family has developed, indeed, a new type of triangle, competition between husband, wife and child.

The feminine role of the mother suffers even greater confusion because of the impact of the occupational system on the family. The mechanization of the home combined with the employment of women by the millions in labor forces outside the home has deprived the mother of her value.

She is educated equally with men for autonomy, not

for domesticity. Yet she demands fulfillment in marriage. She overprotects her children and becomes the source of authority in the home, a satisfaction intensified by the fact that she must substitute for the detached husband. Indeed, the middle class commuting father who sees his children only on week-ends is responsible for the new kind of "suburban matriarchy" which controls the suburb as well as the home.

The absentee father and the dominant mother of the middle class family develop a child who identifies more readily with mother than with father. As a result, girls have a more favorable opportunity for emotional growth than boys who are disciplined *only* by mothers and develop as a reaction formation an identification of goodness with femininity. Their behavior as a defense against feminine identification may run into antisocial directions and a glorification of toughness. Because the family is small, sibling rivalry is intensified. The child is also pressured by the achievement value orientation of the middle class. The child is not accepted unconditionally. It is approved if it lives up to performance expectations. Parents may become anxious and guilty over whether lack of child achievement may expose their own faults. Yet democratic individualism has lifted the value of the child to a point where we now speak of the child's rights and in those homes in which the father is detached and the function of the mother decreased, children may even take over control, producing a kind of confused, undisciplined, child-centered family.

Primarily middle class, the Jewish family has not escaped this general pattern. At the same time, however, it retains qualities derived from its own ethnic and religious culture. Since the majority of Jewish families are of east European stock, the remarks to follow are confined to what shall be alluded to as east European Jewish heritage. It is relevant in this discussion also to refer to the Biblical and

Talmudic family behavior patterns (which have been explored by David Mace and Louis Epstein) insofar as from them we have acquired three Jewish attitudes toward marriage which the Jew has retained and which in varying degrees affect the American pattern. These attitudes are reflected in sex, divorce, and marital values.

Modern man is so preoccupied with pornographic talk, popular novels and even pedantic studies about sex, that he has come to believe that the cure-all for marital problems is sexual know-how. This conforms to the notorious American reliance on mechanical rationalism for solving everything, but it does not achieve the emotional maturity without which sex cannot make marriage endure. Effort is being made to develop a more humane attitude toward sex, but, unfortunately, in the Christian tradition, sex has too long been associated with sin to be easily separated from it. From St. Paul to T. S. Eliot, marriage has been considered a concession to the lower instincts and the sexual impulse an evil power from the very first man whose fall came from succumbing to the temptations of a designing woman. In their worthy efforts to free Christians from this unnatural sex concept derived from the New Testament, some sexologists like Kinsey attempt to trace Christian Puritan inhibitions back to the "Ancient Hebrews" of the Old Testament. In overemphasizing Biblical prohibitions against sensual abnormality, they have ignored the overall attitude of the Bible toward sex, love, procreation and family, all of which are joyously affirmed as sacred, and as conformations of God. By using the marital relationship of husband and wife in their language to symbolize God's love for Israel, the prophets reveal the positive Jewish attitude toward marriage, not to mention the "Song of Songs" glorification of the physical nature of sex. The Talmudic tradition continued this healthy normal attitude toward sex. Even for the "ancient" Jew, sex existed not

only for the propagation of the race, but sexual play in marriage, instead of being condemned, was encouraged when it increased individual happiness. The modern Jewish family is, therefore, not warned against, but encouraged to become sexually mature through appropriate education.

That there has been less divorce, proportionately, in the modern Jewish home and family is in no small measure related to the healthier Jewish attitude toward sex, the very fact of Jewish permissiveness with reference to divorce, and particularly to Judaism's high evaluation of marriage. The significant fact is that while divorce was sanctioned religiously and legally, the Jew rarely availed himself of it. He preferred to work out the problem of marriage and endure its travails just because his tradition always placed a high value on marriage.

This high evaluation of marriage is even more clearly revealed in the culture of the east European Jewish background of the American Jew. As yet, no adequate sociological study has been made of this background of the American Jewish family comparable to the excellent studies of the immigrant Polish and Italian families. In his Americanization studies of the immigrant family, the late W. T. Thomas did begin an analysis of the characteristic strengths which the Jewish family brought with it from the ghetto, among them a feeling of kinfolk, *mishpocha*, as contrasted with the isolated individualistic family, although it crowded the homes with every new arriving cousin. The east European Jewish family also had a sense of the obligation of the family to the Jewish community which enforced desirable family behavior sensitive to public opinion. Some feeling for this extended family still strengthens Jewish home life in the rise of "family circle associations" in the largest Jewish community in America. The Christian sociologist, Dr. Thomas, even found a difference in the frequent quarreling in the immigrant Jewish family life. In-

stead of severing the family, Jewish quarreling served as emotional catharsis and really expressed the desire of the members to remain together. The Thomas collection of three thousand letters to the family complaint column of the *Jewish Daily Forward* from 1920 to 1945, known as the "Bintl Brief," awaits the scholarship of a Jewish sociologist. From this collection, together with the Zborowski-Herzog re-creation of life in the *stetl*, the East European Jewish village, as described in their *Life Is With People*, we can recapture the mood of the East European Jewish home.

Because in some Americanized middle class Jewish families a little of that mood still persists, it is well to be reminded of those East European Jewish elements that made up a *sholom bayis*, "a peaceful household." In it, marriage was such an archetype of all joy that the Sabbath was called a bride and the infant boy was dedicated to *chuppah* (marriage) at the rite of his circumcision. The husband and wife were a *zivug*, a pair matched by tempering romance with consideration of *yichus* (family background) and guided by that symbolic preserver of family status, the *shadchan* (the matchmaker). The dual authority of the parents was indicated by reference to them as *der tateh-mameh*. The *mameh* was too busy being the *balabosteh* (house manager), keeping a kosher home, to have much time left for neuroses. The Swedish immigrant family, so popularized in *I Remember Mamma*, has its counterpart in the *Yiddishe mameh* who also had her *knippl*, a knot in a handkerchief in which she kept coins for family emergencies. Despite her manipulations of children through oversolicitous feeding, belief in her love was strong in a hazardous world, for the parents' greatest happiness was to *kleib naches fun kinder* (find happiness in children). *Machen menschen fun kinder* (make people out of children) was a sacred obligation, even though the maturation of the *stetl* child to adulthood

was much too rapid. Yet, punishment through constant verbal reference to appropriate conduct contained in the popular phrases *derekh erets, es past nit* and for *azzus ponim* or impertinence, a *potch* from *mameh* or worse, a stern look from *tateh*—was not regarded as rejection, since the withdrawal of love from a Jewish child was unthinkable. Nor did obedience preclude a child's questioning which was encouraged. With three generations in a small home, let no one think that *sholom bayis* was a place of unruffled serenity. Affection and verbal arguments were not considered incompatible, reminding us of Blake's poem,

I was angry with my friend,  
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.  
I was angry with my foe,  
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

Any nostalgia for the security of the past should not blind us to the well-known weaknesses of the traditional east European Jewish family life, particularly as it lacked opportunity to adjust to modern life, not only because of isolation in the ghetto, but also because of its own authoritarian orthodoxy which handicapped this adjustment. We also know that every *stetl* had at least one local village *meshugenar* (fool) so there was no absence of neuroses in that family structure.

However, not overlooking its weaknesses, the east European Jewish attitude toward the family was on the whole realistic as well as sanctified and its stability was related to a strong sense of obligation to the survival of the Jewish group. This culture of the *stetl* no longer exists. Its children are making their lives out of different stuff in America and Israel. It remains to be seen just how long even some of the mood of this passing Jewish family tradition will survive the modern tempo, though one would like to believe these words of Margaret Mead in her preface to her

study of the *stetl*, "with the traditional capacity of the Jews to preserve the past, while transmuting it into a healthy relationship to the present, much of the faith and hope which lived in the *stetl* will inform the lives of the descendants of the *stetl* in other lands."

The contemporary Jewish family has the advantages but also the weaknesses of its modern individualistic character. Its stability could be strengthened if it retained, if not these former family folk values, at least some of the elements of *group loyalty* which supported Jewish home life two generations ago. Is there not some evidence that this Jewish group loyalty persists in the fact that there is less intermarriage in the American Jewish middle class than was prophesied? The old predictions of Professor Ruppin about the disappearance of Judaism due to intermarriage were based on pre-Hitler western European figures; whereas in America the intermarriage rate among Jews is the lowest of all American groups. The second generation does break loose for a time, and in this regard it is relevant to notice a higher incidence of intermarriage among the sons of so-called orthodox homes which made no adjustment at all to modern needs. However, the second generation eventually tends to find its life within its own cultural group, especially as that group succeeds through internal reforms to make adjustments.

Discrimination also tends to turn the Jew toward his own family life for acceptance and security. The first generation immigrant family fought discrimination and economic insecurity at the same time. Some of their children thought economic success would be easier if they might forget Jewish identity. The confusion of this "lost" Jewish second generation has been exhaustively treated in the American Jewish novel. There is evidence, however, that the third generation is less prone to confuse commercial success with personal happiness. Some sons of wealthy

entrepreneurs even surprise their chagrined fathers with the characteristic old-fashioned Jewish preference for learning to business.

There is also a new awareness of the need to develop lines of communication between the members of a family, lest the family be silenced into dumbness by TV sets. The poetry of Jewish home ritual is being rediscovered as the language of the family. This ritual finds psychiatric justification in Erich Fromm's recommendation that we recover this "forgotten language," and in the sociological studies of James Bossard who sets great store on the neglected value of family ritual.

Finally, there is evidence that anti-Judaism, as a retaliation against the old over-ritualistic Jewish home, has worn itself out, and the confused young Jewish parent today confesses an honest concern about what he should tell his questioning child about God and about being a Jew. True, religion is not yet approached for its profounder insights, but out of typically American interest in its practical use. Yet, even this pragmatic approach is supported by the statistical studies of Terman and Burgess, which show that those American homes are *not* the most stable where religion is either too strict or too little, but they are *more* stable where religion plays an intelligent, meaningful, active role.

These, then, are the positive and negative aspects of the Jewish family in modern society. I have attempted to show how the Jewish family has been subjected to the same structural and attitudinal changes which have affected the urban middle class family in general and that it reflects these alterations on the roles of the father, the mother, and the child. As a result, the Jewish family enjoys the advantages of the new individualism, but reveals also its weakness. Some of these weaknesses are counterbalanced by the sexual and domestic realism of Jewish

values, by the sanctification of marriage and by the sense of communal obligation inherent in the specifically Jewish family pattern. There is evidence that these values are being recovered in part through a revived awareness of Jewish group loyalty, and a rediscovery of ritual and religion. But, however Jewish the American Jewish family may become, it will not be immune from the anxiety and tensions of modern life. It will require guidance, especially by parents who have always realized that the preservation of Judaism itself is synonymous with preserving the Jewish family.

If I interpret our Jewish heritage correctly, we will not plead for government subsidies merely to revive old-fashioned large families as other authoritarian religions may plead. We will not snobbishly encourage the elite to have more babies as certain sociologists suggest. We will not support the demands for stricter divorce laws based on the present artificial adversary procedure. Rather will we support the movement for more humane and moral divorce laws. We will not ask for less but for more proper sex education for our children in high schools as well as colleges. We will not bemoan the loss of the former functions of the home which will never be replaced. Rather will we help parents to see that these changes now afford them even a fuller opportunity to develop in the home those resources of love which build the strength of character and the personal stability our civilization sorely needs.

Through the cooperative guidance of education, psychology and religion, the Jewish family in modern society can be directed to the security of mature happiness and great moral purpose.



# The Family—and the “Emotion Quotient”

BY ABRAHAM J. KLAUSNER

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## The Family — and the “Emotion Quotient”

I am going to ask you to do a very difficult thing. I am sure that many times you have had man's weaknesses pointed out to you. You have been cautioned about the misfortunes that man in general heaps upon himself. In fact, by now you must know this theoretical man quite well. You can point out, almost without thinking, his errors, his misconceptions, and his failings. I ask you to forget this illustrative man about whom you know so much. Instead, I want you to concentrate upon yourselves, about whom you know so little. I want you to look into your own home, your own heart, and attempt to evaluate your personal achievements and shortcomings.

As you open the door of your home, you will see yourself as others see you. And if I should say to you, “Who is he?” would you know quite how to answer me? Up until now you have thought of yourself as a name, an address perhaps, a citizen of a particular place. I can tell you who you really are. Overwhelming as it may sound, you are modern man, the contemporary person, the individual of the day, of the hour. If you were to go further and probe into the life and deeds of yourself, the modern man, what would you be likely to discover? Probably you would see what Henrik Ibsen, the great nineteenth century playwright, saw in his remarkable analysis of man's struggle to discover himself. Ibsen found that most of us are like onions. One layer after another can be peeled off and there is no core to be found.

You ask yourselves why this is so. Why is there no core? Why is life for many a series of makeshift, unrelated lay-

ers, one added to another, independent of a central theme or thought? I have gone in search of an answer and I have found it in the make-up of the modern home, the family, and the way of life we have patterned for ourselves and for our children.

The home and the family, it seems, are very much taken for granted, but in truth, there is no more important factor in the life of man in any day or age. We commonly think of the home as the place where we grow from childhood to adulthood. This does not necessarily imply the growth from immaturity to maturity. The home is the residence of the family. The family is the primary transmitter of culture. "The arresting and somewhat terrifying fact about the home," Overstreet tells us in his popular volume, "is that the new human being is wholly at the disposal of the old. The child may come trailing clouds of glory; but what happens largely depends upon the adults who have the child in their control; who both lay down the initial rules for his behavior and build his first expectations about life."

Life for the child can be sifted into two main lines of development. First, there is the physical growth of the individual, a natural and automatic process which occurs uninterruptedly in any home. The second is a matter of far greater delicacy. It is the growth of personality. The freedom that accompanies the physical development of the child enables him, in some measure, to perfect his personality. It equips him to take hold of himself, and, so to speak, introduce himself to the great wealth of knowledge and experience in order that he may eventually understand and cope with the problems of life.

It is here, in directing and influencing the personality development of the child, that the family has in a large measure failed to play its part. It is characteristic of modern city life, where great numbers of people congregate in a relatively small area, that education be institutionalized

—that is, taken out of the home. Schools are provided to do for the child what was once the duty of the parents. This is not a harmful process. It is the most natural and practical solution. But formal education, friends, in itself, will not make the individual all that he should be. For the educated person should theoretically emerge from his state of dependence manifesting a thorough understanding of himself. From your own experience I am sure you have found this to be untrue. Many educated persons, like Ibsen's onion, are only a series of unrelated layers without a central core.

Why has the home been failing? How can we account for the inability of the family to recognize the full proportions of the child's development? To understand the failure of the home we must gain insight into "The Myth of Education." We live in what may be termed an IQ Age. The IQ, as most of you know, represents the intelligence quotient of an individual. It is a test which is in almost universal usage in our schools. This examination proposes to expose the inherited intellectual capacity of the individual. When measured the individual is given a score. We assume on the basis of the test that those persons with the highest scores will attain the most in life and will correspondingly contribute the most to life. Society, therefore, provides the high IQ's with the most expensive tools such as scholarships, grants, admission to schools and colleges.

Herein lies what I referred to as "The Myth of Education." In the first place, the IQ does not measure a capacity for reason and understanding. It only singles out those with the capacity for quick mental adaptation. Certainly, the tools we provide do not prepare the individual for living. They merely equip him with an ability to earn a livelihood. The IQ approach wrongly assumes that the perfection of life is dependent on the mind of man. The most brilliant

of men should, therefore, make the most successful adaptation to life's problems. This is not so. In fact it is sometimes just the opposite. The highly educated man, the scholar, often becomes so immersed in his studies that when faced with an every-day problem requiring only a bit of common sense, he finds himself virtually helpless. So you see, education is not enough. A man may be a fine physician but an irresponsible father. He may have the best preparation toward financial security but little or nothing toward emotional security. There is no course in any school entitled “Education for Integrity” or “Education for Faith.” At best these are the by-products of our educational system. Living, as we have come to believe, is something so simple that no particular effort is required to learn how to do it. Just because we all manage to live in some fashion, life is considered a matter in which everyone qualifies as an expert.

Living is an art, and this is “The Truth of Education.” The art of living is taught in the home, not in the school. The failure of the home to introduce this knowledge into its children's lives may well render useless years of study in specialized professional fields. For without this vital knowledge the individual is as helpless as an infant. And it does not require a high IQ to live artfully. We all know a blessed number of humble folk who neither profess nor pretend a capacity of intellectual performance, but who maintain an intense faith in the fact that somehow God is God, and all is just.

The weakness of the IQ approach toward an understanding and acceptance of life should be apparent. It is clearly demonstrated in the matter of prejudice. Experts have long insisted that prejudice is based on ignorance and misunderstanding. But programs of education and enlightenment have been found not to eradicate prejudice. The IQ factor

gives us not a clue, except, perhaps, that the higher the IQ the more refined the hatred.

I submit to you, therefore, the proposition that our failure in the home to educate for living is the result of our rejection of what I shall hereafter refer to as the EQ, the "emotion quotient," the emotional understanding and acceptance of life. When the home rejects the EQ factor it hampers growth. Education becomes manipulation, a process of leading the child to that which is considered desirable, and cutting off the child from that which is seemingly undesirable.

In any home, as I am sure you have found in your own, there are large areas which present a problem not only for the child but also for the parent. In these areas the parent is prepared to grant the child freedom of decision, even though his dependence interferes with his ability to soundly formulate a decision for himself. The most important of these problem areas is religion. Religion for many has become a matter of manipulation, not education. We tend to be Sabbath devotees lacking a genuine understanding of a 24-hour-a-day faith. Religion, an essential form of education, is too much taken out of the home. It is too much considered the specialty of the clergyman. But religion does not exist only in the spiritual leader, and inside the doors of the place of worship. Religion is the indispensable element which invests life in the home with the emotional quotient, the spiritual understanding necessary for the practice of artful living. So look into your own home and ask yourselves. "Is my home nothing but an intellectual shrine, devoid of spiritual guidance and reverence for God? Do I and my children have a real understanding of life that books alone cannot teach us? Is there a central theme for us? Is there a core to our existence?"

I have made many references to the child, his need for an emotional acceptance of his world. Are we not all chil-

dren, constantly growing, always searching, never fully born? Can there be no core to our existence? Are we to be sustained by layers of culture which can be peeled off as readily as they are added? How shall we be sustained in our growth, and where shall we find meaning for our existence? The answer is, in the home, the "small sanctuary." Here reason is to be supplemented by an emotional acceptance of life. The child must understand. He must also love. He must know he is a child of God and find pride in that fact. He must be made aware of his relationships with others of God's children. He dare not be separated from them.

Man cannot live in an intellectual vacuum, for then he is alone. Man cannot live alone. His beginnings are in the home. There he rises from dependency to independency, and there he is given the opportunity to grow from immaturity to maturity. The family must provide him with the first meaning of life, his first love, his first loyalty, his first devotion, his first feeling of belongingness, his first source of pride. Rooted in these experiences, we become part of a pattern stretching into the future, marking our path and designating our responsibilities. We are then always together, never alone, always related to a central core and a central theme. We are part of the heritage of the past, and the repository for future generations. Bound together in love and devotion we shall be sustained by the sacred quality of our existence and find joy in the dawn of each new day, each new experience leading us to a love for and a devotion to life.



# Religion and the Democratic Family

BY STANLEY R. BRAV

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## Religion and the Democratic Family

A gathering of prominent social scientists issued this declaration: "In the present crisis, religion could very well reassert its ancient prerogatives as the guardian of the family and home." Here were America's foremost authorities on family life, calling upon religion to reinforce its influence upon the fundamental institution in human society, the Home, so perilously threatened by the world upheaval in which we find ourselves.

It is not that the family's existence, as such, is endangered. This smallest of social organisms has, after all, weathered the tempests of every generation since the first Adam "took unto himself" the first Eve. Neither the fantastic Utopian dialectics of a Plato's Soviet Russian legislation of some twenty years ago could affect in the least the permanence of the family's position in the social ordering of the human race. As Dr. Carle Zimmerman of Harvard points out, the family unit is an enduring fact. In his own words, "Men psychologically devitalized by the storms of this century of wars will want a family, different from the non-family regime of life."

What concerns thinking American men and women at this hour is not whether there will be such a thing as family living in the world of tomorrow, but rather how we, who cherish the ideal of the democratic way of life, can best use the family institution for the perpetuation and enlargement and more widespread dissemination of democracy's blessings both for the people of this fortunate land and for mankind at large.

It is a well-recognized fact that family life in our day is in a state of transition, undergoing radical and perplexing changes that make our homes far different from those of our grandfathers. We who are thrown into the midst of this evolutionary whirlpool cannot by any means be certain that these changes are wholesome and progressive. We are confronted by highly disturbing evidence. There is a new liberty granted to Youth, which is often abused into becoming license. There are the mounting divorce records which show that the marriage of one out of every five couples ends on the rocks. There is the impact and shock upon the home made by unemployment, low income, indecent housing, and now the abnormalities and immoralities of an emergency or war period which take an incalculable toll. One is sometimes forced to marvel that the institution of the family "stands the gaff" as well as it does.

For, despite the disquieting testimony that confronts us on every hand, there is reason to believe, with one very wise observer, that "intelligent parenthood, successful marriage and happy home life are now more generally possible than they have ever been before." Family life is being freed, in the first place, from much that is irrelevant to its true character: woman's age-old household drudgery and her slavery to involuntary and incessant child-bearing, the child's exploitation and crippling repressions, and man's emotional immaturity which gave him his traditional prejudices in favor of masculine superiority and made genuine companionship between husband and wife a virtual impossibility.

Even more important than this sloughing off of accumulated impediments, so far as evaluating the new potentialities of family life today, is another factor. Progress in the social sciences, paralleling the great discoveries and inventions of our era, is making possible a new ob-

jective understanding of human nature. Now, for the first time, it is becoming possible to consider the family from a scientific and experimental standpoint, and deliberately to plan a democratic pattern of family relations in the interests of the development of the individuals within the family group. In other words, now as never before, can the family itself become a democracy in microcosm, a model state in miniature, which through its day-by-day experience in fully cooperative, democratic living will become the finest conceivable school for the Americans of tomorrow.

We cannot afford to forget, just because repetition of the fact has made it a commonplace, that over and above the family's purpose to provide a relatively stable and socially valuable form of sex expression, together with the material and spiritual atmosphere of homelife that meets undeniable human needs—we must not forget that the family stands, however supplemented by other educational agencies, as the fundamental formative influence in the development of personality and character. It has been well put in these words: "We may delegate to the school much of the formal education of children, adolescents and adults; but the family remains a potent instrument of education for both children and their parents. No one can escape the educational influence of the home in the formation of habits, attitudes, and outlooks, both during the early plastic years and also during the later years of life. We may transfer to the church and the synagogue the formal ritual of religion; but the home continues to shape the religious life of men and women as well as children even more than the religious institutions. Teachers of religion recognize this fact in the constant complaint that they cannot counteract in the synagogue or church what children learn in the home through precept but chiefly by example." I should only add that it is just because the home exercises so ineradicable an influence upon the psy-

chological constitution of normal human beings, upon what religion calls the soul of men and women, that the church and the synagogue have—for long years—been so vitally concerned with the problems of family life.

Many of the difficulties confronting the American home today are not so glaringly novel that our Judaeo-Christian religious forces can be said to confront them now for the first time. Quite to the contrary, it is a matter of historical record that religion has—over the centuries—made vocal the ideas of successful family life. Religion has insisted that mutual love between husband and wife, coupled with understanding and a sense of common responsibility, is the only guarantee for happiness in the home. It has consistently condemned extra-marital relations as abortive to family felicity. Religion has established the goal of permanence in wedded life. Religion in many ways has fostered the improvement of the position of womanhood. Religion has emphasized the home's importance in the nurture of the child. And perhaps above all, religion has labored incessantly to make the family something more than a social institution, elevating the concept of marriage from a biologic or legal entity to that of a "holy estate," a high sacrament, or, in terms of Judaism, a *Kiddushin*, a sanctification, an opportunity for the spiritual fulfillment of man's destiny in life.

Nor has religion been blind to the failure of many men and women to make of the marriage bond the joyous testament to sanctified living that it is intended to be. Centuries before family counseling became a social-service project, pastors of all of our faiths were ministering to husbands and wives who were not "making a go" of their marriage vows. Centuries before domestic relations courts were set up in our judiciaries, priests and ministers and rabbis functioned in their capacity. Even now that these instruments have become public institutions, the service of religious

functionaries is still frequently sought when homes are threatened with dissolution and families face liquidation.

More than this, the great conferences of religious leaders have set up commissions to study family problems in the light of the most recent findings of social science, and to assist ministers in making their work in this field more effective. One of our tasks is to help improve marriage legislation throughout the states. For example, we are interested in state legislation requiring health examinations of applicants for marriage, and preventing those with certain diseases from marrying and weakening the race. But our primary concern is to stimulate educational preparation for marriage in our young people, particularly just prior to contemplated weddings. We believe that training for marriage is important enough to be offered in our religious schools. We feel that special Family Institutes for young people should be sponsored annually by churches and synagogues. And we urge our religious leaders to counsel seriously and deeply with every young couple who come for religion's blessing upon their troth. We are convinced that if young people would spend one quarter of the time they give to preparing for making a living, on learning HOW to live—a part of which is the science of marriage and parenthood—many of today's domestic problems would be largely solved.

Trying to see the picture as a whole, it is perhaps an understatement to say that religion today seeks to offer balance, spiritual ballast, as well as inspiration to the democratic type of family that is evolving out of the stern, patriarchal, dictatorial patterns laid down by our grandfathers. In the new democratic family is one of America's most potent educational tools for the promotion of her traditional idealism. In the new democratic family, too, lies religion's great hope for the development of men and women of that spiritual fiber of which God's Kingdom on Earth will be built.

# Modern Family Life Is an Art

BY JESHAIA SCHNITZER

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## **Modern Family Life Is an Art**

No one will deny the importance of family life. Every individual interested in the well-being and happiness of people will acquiesce to the important role of family life in this connection. Then let us not look too lightly upon setting aside a special time to take note of the institution we must live in, and to become more fully aware of the processes which can make it worthwhile.

A great deal has been written and said about the importance of the family in molding character and in safeguarding the moral life of the community. Primarily, it is in the home and within the family circle that the habits of life are cultivated and the basic attitudes towards society are shaped and developed. It is through the family, above all, that the virtues of love, good will, cooperation, and consideration are instilled in the young. These serve as the basis for mature future development of the growing adolescents—and then the blossoming young man and young woman.

We must be concerned because family life has undergone a vast change in the past fifty years. There has come to pass in our lifetime what amounts to a veritable transformation of the home. Many of its traditional functions and responsibilities have been relegated to other agencies. In many instances, the family is no longer a family in the sense as our grandfathers knew it or even as our fathers experienced it. Today, on an ordinary weekday, members of the average family hardly see one another. It is a far cry from the family life of the small isolated farm or the *shtetel* of eastern Europe. With a time schedule which often

approaches the stagger system, there is very little opportunity for the family to really get together during the week. In many a home nowadays the traditional bonds that knit the family together in the past have almost disappeared. New fads and new interests and many outside pressures have tended to crowd out the spirit of religion and of religious observance from the home. Production, speed, turnpikes, throughways, jet-propelled flights have set the patterns in our family lives. When we stop to analyze our family situation today, we discover that we are all living in a world of hustle and bustle. It is a world, as someone aptly put it, of "five-minute breakfasts and ten-minute lunches, of slot machine coffee, of lunch counter sandwiches, and of fifteen-minute commuter train schedules." We hurry about at a mad and dizzy pace. We have become so accustomed to gearing our lives to the necessity of speed that the maddening race has too often become our daily routine to the utter neglect of the family bond and the ultimate family welfare.

National Family Week asks us to take our foot off the speed pedal so that we may be able to look at our gauges. It bids us to take time out and evaluate what we are doing for family life under our own roof. We can do this better than did our forebears, thanks to the knowledge and understanding which have resulted from the social sciences and the new insights of psychology. I believe we know much more about the dynamics of marriage and the art of family living than did our grandfathers and grandmothers. Both the practitioner and the lay person can look upon marriage and family life with a little more objectivity than could others of previous generations.

The difficulties lie in the fact that it is so hard to introduce new ideas, new cultural patterns into the lives of human beings. The psychologist, the psychiatrist, the marriage counselor, the social family worker, the human rela-

tionist, through study, observation, and experiment have evolved a whole body of knowledge. This body of knowledge is not just haphazard facts, like those of the old wives' school, but most of it is basic, ascertained facts about human behavior and human emotions which can help people to grow into maturity. And in turn it can help a couple to appreciate that marriage is a cooperative venture, so that family living becomes an art. Such an appreciation of family life makes of the husband, the wife, and the children artists in the greatest adventure of life.

Family life education is endeavoring to tell boys and girls, young men and women that marriage and family living is an art. This art requires real preparation, both technical and professional in nature. The minister, the rabbi, the marriage counselor, the social worker, and the educator are trying to tell married couples that differences, crises, and anxieties are ordinary phenomena of family living. Furthermore, they want people to realize that they ought to feel free to use the means of talking through these anxieties or problems with a counselor. It is becoming easier for groups of married people to come together and talk about common problems with the guiding hand of a trained worker—some call it group therapy, or group marriage counseling.

Perhaps all of us who venture into the delicate field of marriage relations need one or another kind of help—some times in our lives. One experienced marriage counselor who has been working with people and their problems for many decades put it aptly when she said: "We ought to realize that none of us is strong enough and mature enough to be able to always solve our problems. We ought to accept the fact that sometimes in our lives all humans will need somebody else to help them."

Is there a relationship between family living, home life,

and Judaism and the synagogue? It does have a definite relationship because Judaism, and the synagogue as its administrative agent, is basically concerned with people, their human relations, and the home in which they live. Listen to these striking words of Rabbi Morris Adler of Shaare Zedek in Detroit: "Judaism begins at home. It doesn't begin at a meeting or a conference. It doesn't begin at a synagogue service or a philanthropic campaign. It begins in homes where Judaism lives in the atmosphere and is integrated in the normal pattern of daily life. It begins in homes where the Sabbath spreads its aura of sanctity and spirituality. It begins in homes where the Jewish words re-echo, where the Jewish book is honored, and the Jewish song is heard. It begins in homes where the child sees and participates in symbols and rites that link him to a people and a culture. It begins in homes where the Jewish etching or painting and the Jewish ceremonial object are visible and eloquently though silently exercise their influence upon those who behold them. It begins in the home where into the deepest layers of a child's developing personality are woven strands of love for and devotion to the collective life of the Jewish community. No advance in group techniques and administrative skills can compensate for the loss of home training and inculcation.

"Jewish organized life is short-sighted and pathetically involved in its own machinery when it does not include in its program stress upon the towering and decisive fact that Judaism begins *in the home*."

Could we but take an even more conclusive position and say Judaism begins in wholesome family life, in artful marriage relations, and in good home living?

National Family Week, if it has done nothing else than to provide us with the opportunity to think and to reflect on the problems of the modern family and marriage, has

served a useful and worthwhile purpose. Yet, we should go further and reaffirm our faith in the family as the soundest institution for creating wholesome personalities. We should rededicate ourselves to the Jewish home with the firm belief that it can serve as the positive means for developing moral and upright individuals. Last, but not least of all, we need to realize that marriage is an art to which we must not only bring paint and brush, but knowledge and skills, feelings and appreciations. To this we need but add our faith in God and in His magnificent works, saying daily: "In His goodness He reneweth continually each day, the work of Creation," and striving to see marriage as God's blessing for man from the beginning of time . . . and to reach out to this wondrous art of human relations.

# Circumcision — A Covenant for the Preservation of the Jewish Family

BY MORRIS SHOULSON

RABBI MORRIS SHOULSON is the author of Circumcision — in Jewish Law and Modern Medical Practice; pioneered in the practice of circumcision as a profession in keeping with modern medical and surgical practice; awarded a doctorate by the International Academy of London in recognition of his writings on circumcision. Has been Staff Member and Chaplain of the Albert Einstein Medical Center (Jewish Hospital) in Philadelphia, Pa. for more than two decades.

## Circumcision—A Covenant for the Preservation of the Jewish Family

There is perhaps no Jewish institution which has been preserved more faithfully and accepted with greater joy than the religious rite of circumcision.

Circumcision is not an exclusively Jewish rite. It was, and still is, practised also among many peoples and tribes all over the world. It is estimated that between two hundred and three hundred million people, or one-seventh of the world's population, practise circumcision at present. There are statistical figures to prove that in the United States more than 92 percent of all males are circumcised before they leave the hospital.

However, only among the Jewish people has circumcision become a wholly religious rite between God and man, serving as one of the great forces for the survival of the Jewish family and the peoplehood of Israel. In Biblical, Talmudic, and in rabbinic Judaism, circumcision is recognized as based on the most ancient tradition and its importance has its foundation in our Jewish religious laws and customs.

Jewish parents today do not question the need of circumcision when their "bundle from heaven" is a boy. Because the ritual of circumcision involves at once matters of traditional customs, as well as medical and surgical practice, it is necessary for us to understand this rite in its proper perspective.

To the Jewish people circumcision is a divine commandment, given by God to Abraham for himself and his de-

scendants: "Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee: Every male child among you shall be circumcised when eight days old." (Gen. 17:9, 10, 12). Circumcision is therefore called the "covenant of Abraham," and must be performed on the eighth day after birth, unless the health of the child makes the postponement necessary. When no postponement is necessary, the circumcision is performed even on the Sabbath and Holy Days, including Yom Kippur. Once postponement occurs, the circumcision may not be performed on the Sabbath, Festivals or Holy Days. Circumcision is always performed during the daytime, although there is no special hour which is more appropriate. While the absence of a *minyan* is not necessarily a deterrent, it is preferable that a *minyan* be present during the religious rite of the *Brith Milah*.

The most essential participants and functionaries at a circumcision, in addition to the father and the *Mohel*, are the "godparents"—the male who is called *Kwatter*, the female, called *Kwatterin*, and the *Sandek*.

The "godmother" is given the honor of bringing the infant into the circumcision room. She places the child in the arms of the "godfather" from whom the father—the *ba-al Brith*—takes the baby, and places him into the lap of the *Sandek*. He sits near the *Kisse Shel Eliyahu*—Elijah's choir, close to the circumcision table. The prophet Elijah is considered the typical zealot of the "holy covenant" and is the forerunner of the Messiah is called *Mal-ach Ha-brith*—messenger of the covenant, as well as "guardian" of the child entering the covenant.

During this ceremony, and while the operation is performed, the appropriate traditional benedictions and prayers are recited by the *mohel* and the father, who says, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the Universe,

Who didst consecrate us with Thy commandments and has commanded us to bring this child into the covenant of our ancestor, Abraham." All those present respond, "Just as he has entered the covenant of Abraham, may he also enter the study of the Torah, into marriage, and the performance of good deeds."

Usually the family's rabbi, will, over a cup of wine, recite the traditional prayer for the future welfare of the child and his mother, at which time the Hebrew name will be given to the baby boy. The cup of wine used in the ceremony is sent to the mother that she may drink from it. The child is then returned to the nursery and all the assembled guests partake of a *seuda*—a religious repast.

Today there is nothing mysterious or unknown about the simple circumcision procedure. Nothing untoward will result if only the most rudimentary rules of asepsis are observed by the *mohel*. Any physical infirmity in the infant, who is carefully and regularly watched by the attending physicians and nurses, automatically postpones the *bris*, even according to the *Halacha* (traditional law), until the counter-indication is medically cleared up and totally eliminated.

In most cases the *bris* can take place immediately after the doctors declare the infant generally sound; but where there is a temperature elevation, conjunctivitis, vomiting, or similar disorders, the *Halacha* requires that a "normal" period of seven times twenty-four hours must pass; in more serious cases thirty days, and in extreme instances, one is to be circumcised only as an adult.

The *Halacha* specifically requires no circumcision in the case of a child of a hemophiliac family or where "Christmas" disease is present, when even a minor bruise or cut can cause serious consequences.

Even those who never question the validity of the *Halacha* are nevertheless heartened when science and medical

practice pay tribute to the *Halacha* and vindicate Jewish tradition and custom.

If the rite were intended merely as an operation for the purpose of cutting away the *orlah* (*praeputium*), no such unusual word as *milah* would need be employed to describe the circumcision. The Hebrew language has more familiar words meaning "to cut," like *gazor*, *hatoch*, *karot*, and others. The etymology of the word *milah* points to a "spiritual" rather than a "physical" cutting-out of something.

The modern *mohel*, in addition to being a man of Jewish learning and a person of genuine zeal for Jewish tradition and religious observance, is also an accredited and certified specialist. So adept is the experienced *mohel* that even physicians prefer his services to that of a surgeon when the circumcision is to be performed on their own sons. Crown Prince Charles, the new Prince of Wales, son of the present Queen Elizabeth, was circumcised as an infant in Buckingham Palace by the leading *mohel* of London.

The finest modern circumcision instruments in use today were invented and perfected by rabbis who practice *milah* as a profession. The use of these popular new instruments in the hands of a competent efficient *mohel* precludes any danger of post-operative bleeding or infection.

The master *mohel*, who is fully conversant with all the modern medical standards of surgical cleanliness (asepsis), can perform an almost bloodless circumcision, and the minor wound heals uneventfully in a matter of a few hours.

We must turn to modern medical science if we are interested in justifying the possible *Halachik* (Jewish Legalistic) reason for the advantageous choice of the eighth day for the performance of *Brith Milah*. The Torah does not give us any clue other than the command "He shall be circumcised on the eighth day." We know today that in the normal newborn baby, all the blood clotting factors

do not fully come into play much before the eighth day. During the earlier postnatal days, the prothrombin level, the substance necessary for blood clotting, is low, and hence predisposes to free bleeding; whereas on the eighth day the prothrombin level is more likely to be within normal limits.

The present writer, who performs circumcisions almost every day in the year, has learned from close observation that during the first few postnatal days it is much more difficult to separate the mucous membrane from the glans (*atarah*)—a step without which the performance of circumcision is almost impossible. It is only on or after the eighth day that the adhesion ceases to cling stubbornly.

It is also interesting to note that smegma, the secretion which collects beneath the uncircumcised foreskin, was found by Dr. A. Platt and Dr. A. C. Kohn-Spayer, to cause cancer when injected into mice. In the circumcised male there is no accumulation of smegma and where this possible causative agent of cancer is not present, the males never have cancer of the penis, and women married to circumcised men are not prone to cancer of the cervix.

Medical men the world over are unanimously agreed that cancer of the penis, which constitutes about 3 percent of all cancer in men, is virtually unknown among Jewish males, because the Jews practise ritual circumcision in infancy. A search of the medical literature of the world by an eminent British physician has failed to turn up a single case of penile cancer in a Jew circumcised in infancy. Dr. Harrison C. Harlin, of the Department of Urology at the Veterans Administration Hospital in Brooklyn, tells of the many cases of penile cancer he had seen over a period of ten years at two V.A. hospitals. Not one of the patients he saw was a person who had been circumcised in infancy. "Cancer of the penis," says Dr. Hallin, "does occur when circumcision is performed *after* infancy."

Although, as we can see, medical science has proven that circumcision does carry with it many hygienic advantages, it is important to remember that Jews circumcise their sons solely for religious reasons. There is a vast difference between a surgical circumcision and the *Brith Milah* that is required of us by Judaism. *Brith Milah* is a most sacred religious ceremony. Its whole purpose is not medical and there is a vast difference between the normal medical approach and the requirements of *Brith Milah*. Thus, the Jewish religious requirements are not met by mere surgical circumcision.

Unfortunately, many of the younger parents today believe that a physician is more capable in the performance of circumcision than the expert *mohel*. This has no basis in fact. We must be cognizant of the truth and recognize the fact that the physician normally performs a circumcision as an adjunct of his practice, while the *mohel* is a true specialist in his field.

Since we do not regard *milah* as merely a health measure, it does not follow that a physician, even though he be a member of the Jewish faith, is qualified to act as a *mohel*. The ritual of circumcision is truly one of the fundamentals of Judaism and has always been approached as a most holy ceremony. When a physician takes the place of a *mohel*, the circumcision ceases to be a *Brith* and becomes nothing more than an ordinary medical operation without any religious significance.

The rite of *Milah* was intended to incline the heart and mind of the initiated youth towards his faith through the "covenant of Abraham," a symbol in his very flesh forever. The *Brith Milah* emphasizes the lofty spiritual concept of ritual circumcision.

The rite was established by divine command in the Torah as a "token of the covenant," and remains to this day the

abiding sign of the consecration of the children of Abraham to the God of Abraham.

Jewish history is replete with shining examples of the loyalty and devotion with which this *Mitzvah* has been and still is being observed by all Jewish parents throughout the generations of Israel. In the defense of the observance of *Brith Milah*, Jewish men and women have in all ages been ready to lay down their lives, whenever and wherever tyrants undertook to uproot the Jewish faith by forbidding the practice of this sacred rite.

Even Benedict Spinoza declared: "Such great importance do I attach to the sign of the covenant, that I am persuaded that it is by itself sufficient to maintain the separate existence of the [Jewish] nation forever."

Let us bear in mind that our hearts should instinctively yearn for an expression of our gratitude to the Creator and his wonders for the wonderful gift of parenthood. Judaism says that we should express our thankfulness, as well as indicate our intention of linking our child with the destiny and hopes of our people by the performance of the sacred precept of *Brith Milah*. It is considered one of the first *Mitzvot* or commandments given to the Jews and, therefore, our forefathers always practised it with the devotion reserved only for the things our people regarded as precious. Through it, the newly born are dedicated to God, to his Torah, and to the high moral and ethical code which circumcision represents. Circumcision's great value lies in the high spiritual conception of this rite developed by the Jew. He saw it as the symbol of a covenant which every male individual in Israel enters into with God; and as an expression of the devotion of the individual Jew to his faith, his family, and his people. It has thus served as one of the great forces for the survival of Israel.

# **3**

## **FIFTH COMMANDMENT FAMILIES**



## FIFTH COMMANDMENT FAMILIES

Among all the Commandments the “weightiest of the weighty” is the Fifth Commandment, “Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother” (Ex: 20-12). This has been called the Commandment “with promise,” since to this Commandment the words of promise are added: “That thy days may be prolonged upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

The full meaning of this Commandment becomes clear only against the broad background of the covenant of God with the Jewish people. This Command follows the Sabbath Command because the Sabbath “is the source and guarantor” of the family life of the Jew. It forms also the connecting link between God and His children—father, mother, son, and daughter—because parents stand in the place of God so far as their children are concerned. Scripture employs the same expressions concerning honoring and revering parents as it does concerning honoring and revering God. Father, mother, and God are equal partners in bringing the child into life. Through individual obedience and the integrity of family life, the Jewish people were able to enjoy long life joining one generation to another in a golden chain linking father to son and son to father.

This Command not only defines the proper filial love; it also defines proper parental affection. We honor our parents particularly when we care for, and love our own children as we ourselves were once loved and cared for by our own parents. Attention given to the proper development of our children is, indeed, payment of the highest tribute to our parents. This unites the generations together,

binding one to the other in honor of our parents before us, as well as to our parents' God. This is expressed in the universal prayer: "Our God and God of our Fathers."

This Fifth Commandment of God is far from being a law for children only. It is equally placed upon parents in the manner in which they honor their sons and their daughters. This is what the Prophet Malachi meant with the words: "And He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers."

The Torah never legislated laws unless a definite need for an enactment was felt. Thus the Torah does not command us to love our children. This is natural and instinctive. But it does command us to honor our fathers and our mothers, because the sense of filial devotion to parents does need social conditioning and is not entirely natural. It is unwise, therefore, for parents to behave as if they had a permanent indissoluble mortgage on the lives of their children. This attitude will spell unhappiness for both.

On the other hand, there is a tendency on the part of children to abandon or ignore their parents thoughtlessly. Taking for granted the financial support of parents who need it, children should learn to share their time, thoughts, experiences and hopes together with their parents who must be given the feeling that they are needed and important in the lives of their children.

Perhaps the parable from the Memoirs of Glueckel of Hamelin (1646-1724) gives us the mood and introspection on this matter of parent-child relations.

\*“A bird once set out to cross a windy sea with its three fledglings. The sea was so wide and the wind so strong that the father bird was forced to carry his young, one

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by one, in his claws. When he was halfway across with the first fledgling, the wind turned to a gale, and he said, 'My child, look how I am struggling and risking my life in your behalf. When you are grown up, will you do as much for me and provide for my old age?' The fledgling replied, 'Only bring me to safety, and when you are old I shall do everything you ask of me.' Whereat the father bird dropped his child into the sea, and it drowned, and he said, 'So shall it be done to such a liar as you.'

"Then the father bird returned to the shore, set forth with his second fledgling, asked the same question, and receiving the same answer, drowned the second child with the cry, 'You too, are a liar!'

"Finally, he set out with the third fledgling, and when he asked the same question, the third and last fledgling replied: 'My father dear, it is true you are struggling mightily and risking your life in my behalf, and I shall be wrong not to repay you when you are old, but I cannot bind myself. This though I can promise: when I am grown up and have children of my own, I shall do as much for them as you have done for me.' Whereupon the father bird said, 'Well spoken, my child, and wisely; your life I will spare and I will carry you to shore in safety.'"



# Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

BY MEIR BELSKY

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## Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

The area of parent-child relationship encompassed by the biblical injunction to honor one's parents has become so infested with modern psychologists that we often forget that we are actually dealing with a Torah value. Nothing causes a contemporary parent more concern than the gnawing doubt that somewhere a psychologist exists who frowns on what he is doing to or with his child. Parents' frantic and anxious searchings for the latest psychological dicta often obscure the fact that in our own back yard, in our own Holy Torah, we can find an enlightening guide toward the development of a healthy pattern of behavior leading to true honor of one's parents.

Concededly, nothing is as vital to the fabric of social structure as good relationship between parents and children. Indeed, the unravelling of this fabric, evidenced by the frightening rise of juvenile delinquency, has turned the bright light of public scrutiny upon this topic. We find that perhaps the largest single cause for complaint against today's schools is the fact that our children aren't taught to obey their parents.

In dealing, however, with this problem from the Torah point of view, it is obvious that we must clearly define the limits of our discussion. We shall not deal with such words as repression, inhibition, personality, or security, nor shall we attempt to stop bed-wetting or thumb-sucking. When we are finished, the child guidance experts shall still be in business and most of our problems shall still be with us. What we can hope for, nevertheless, is a more meaningful understanding of the implications of honoring one's par-

ents for Jewish historical destiny within the context of the eternal, ultimate truth of Torah. Rather than show how to cope with junior, we must learn how to fit junior into our service of God.

The Torah is quite clear on the profound import of honoring one's parents for Jewish survival. Our forefather Jacob, the Patriarch who is the prototype of Jewish survival in exile, who feared not Laban, who feared not even to wrestle with an angel of the Lord, is suddenly frightened by the threat of his approaching brother Esau: Why? Because, our sages tell us, Esau was fortunate in being able to honor his parents during the many years that Jacob was away from home. Rabbi Shimon, in the Talmud, notes that after a lifetime of dedicated service to his parents, he did not achieve even one percent of the fulfillment of this mitzvah that Esau accomplished.

The continued existence of this threat to Jewish survival is evident from the peculiar affinity non-Jews seem to have for this mitzvah. It is still often necessary to point to non-Jewish sources for examples of respect for parents. Who remembers not the tale, related in the Talmud, of the "son of the woman from Ashkelon," Domo ben N'sinoh, who spurned an opportunity for great profit in selling precious stones needed in the Holy Temple because he would not wake his father, under whose sleeping head lay the key to the jewel chest. The threat to Jewish survival can only be eliminated when it will no longer be necessary to look to Ashkelon for examples of how to honor parents.

Proper parental respect is admittedly most difficult to fulfill. It is used by the Talmud as an example of the most difficult of all mitzvos. The great Talmudic Rabbi Abaye found some consolation in being an orphan in that he was at least relieved from the enormous obligations of honoring his parents. Parents are cautioned against making excessive

demands of their children, for the children would then have to fulfill these excessive demands. It is forbidden for a father to strike a grown child, for fear that the enraged child, in a moment of anger, might return the blow—which is punishable by death. Furthermore, although the reward for other mitzvos traditionally awaits man in the Hereafter, the reward for parental respect is in the Here and Now. The fact that the Talmud suggests that one's in-laws are also included in the general obligations of parental respect only serves to underline the apparent difficulties of fulfilling this mitzvah.

And so we are faced with several questions. Why is this particular commandment so important and significant? Why further, is it so difficult to perform? And, finally, why is it so different? Wherein lies the key to some understanding of this unique mitzvah?

There are many areas in Torah which seem to be beyond our human conceptual abilities. The concepts of God, Creation, Eternity—these are all beyond the grasp of finite man. They belong to the realm of the Infinite, and the human mind can only substitute a mathematical symbol for an understanding of Infinity. The certainty that these things exist does still not increase our ability to clearly conceive them.

In a similar manner, there are certain acts, in the form of commandments, which we are called upon to perform—and yet they seem incapable of performance. The Torah calls upon us to "love" our fellow man, and warns us "not to despise your fellow man in your hearts." Is love or hate controllable? Does any one even know why we love or hate? Can one will one's heart to love by willfully reciting regularly "I love my fellow man"? And yet we are so commanded.

To go a step further, on a higher plane, all of man's conduct before God is governed by the twin commands

of "Honor thy God" and "Before the Lord thy God shall ye be in awe." How does one "honor" God? How does one "stand in awe" before God? One either is or isn't in awe; it cannot be willed.

Nevertheless, it is in these seemingly nebulous, inconceivable, incomprehensible concepts that much of Torah ritual assumes meaning. For example, having been in love, we do know how one acts and what one does when in love. However, such behavior is not only the result of being in love, but is that which itself leads to love. For love is a product, a resultant from beneficent, loving acts, rather than the cause for these acts. We learn to love those whom we benefit because we have given to them, not that we give because we have learned to love. The same holds true for hate, awe, honor, and the manifold other attitudes which are called for in the commandments of the Torah.

It follows, therefore, that training in the acts and behavior patterns of an emotion leads to the actual requisition of that emotion. And as with most things, practice makes perfect. It is in this sense that we can understand the Midrashic comment that our comprehension of God's Majesty was made possible by our experiencing the obligations imposed by Pharaoh's majesty in Egypt, participating in his pomp and ceremony, and bending under his yoke.

When viewed in this light, parental respect assumes a new dimension and enlarged scope, far transcending the immediate relationship between parent and child.

As mentioned earlier, our conduct before God is governed by the commands of "Honor thy God" and "Before the Lord thy God shall ye be in awe." But what is honor? How does one act in awe? Where can we find the substance, the behavior pattern, of these commands? What are we called upon to do? We must perforce look elsewhere for a guide, a pattern. But where?

And thus, we are led to the matter of parental respect. For is it not similarly written "Honor thy father and thy mother" and "Every man shall be in awe of his mother and his father"? Here, then, we have the pattern, the training ground, for our conduct toward God. Learning awe and respect at the feet of one's parents enables us to establish, in act and in fact, our necessary relations with God.

Furthermore, the specific acts which parental honor and awe call for become meaningful as a process whereby one becomes a respectful being. We do not sit in our parents' seats, nor do we stand in their appointed places. We never contradict a parent. We do not even concur with a parent, for to do so would be an implication that he needs our concurrence. We never even dream of the familiarity of calling our parents by their first names. Thus is awe developed. We serve our parents, catering to their needs. We feed them, clothe and unclothe them, aid them in their exits and entries. Thus is honor developed. And from here, if these attitudes are properly developed, it is but an easy step to enter into the larger arena, where man deals with his Creator.

Parents are very much concerned for and preoccupied with the needs (both real and imaginary) of their children. He would do well to keep in mind that a parent, any parent, can give his child no greater gift than the ability and know-how to serve the Almighty. Along the way, they will also learn to respect their parents.

# The Role of the Father— A Religious View

BY ROBERT L. KATZ

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## The Role of the Father—A Religious View

All of us are concerned with parent education; many of us who are parents seek guiding principles and goals in family living above and beyond coping with today's or tomorrow's problems and crises; and as citizens we want the father to shape character and social responsibility in our children.

At the very core of our discussion of the role of the father is the question—"where has the authority of the father gone?"—or the question—"what kind of fatherly authority is needed by the child, and what means have we in our new type of democratic, non-authoritarian society for strengthening Father for his indispensable tasks?" No longer does the father sit at the head of the American middle-class table as a patriarch-priest, symbolizing a rigid code, commanding obedience or reverence as the human, everyday counterpart to an all-powerful Deity. At his best, "Dad" or "Pop" is the captain of the team. Sometimes he is cast in the role of a grey-haired sibling. Less jealous for the authority and responsibility of his office than for the freedom and self-expression of his children, the modern father chafes under the burden of his increasing years, envies the youth of his children, and struggles to remain their peer.

The home itself is no longer the castle presided over by the king and judge. The historic fatherly roles have been taken over by other agencies. We must therefore re-examine the role of the father. The power of the father has been broken. But we ourselves must still learn how to be fathers and to fulfill many of the functions tradi-

tionally assigned to the father. We have so long protested the abuses of fatherly authority and we are so imbued with the traumas of the father-son relationship, that we have been all too prone to neglect its creative and necessary side. In psychiatric literature, too, particularly the popular kind that is so much a part of our psychology-centered culture, the fatherly role has been greatly overshadowed by the motherly role and the stress on the emotional security of good mother-child relationships.

Our theme of the importance of the father in the shaping of character and in the child's preparation for the task of leaving his own parents to become a parent, a citizen, and an individual in his own right and in his unique individuality, is illustrated frequently in the Bible and other religious sources. There we can find, alongside passages stressing patriarchial authority, a model of the father as a teacher and as an agent of blessing. He is in religious language a model and a force helping each child to fulfill himself and to achieve a sense of identity.

A religious view holds out the possibility of the father combining authority and love. It emphasizes his role in helping the child to achieve a sense of integrity and individuality at the same time that he learns how to participate in the community. There is no irreconcilable conflict between these two goals. The good father is the symbol, the embodiment of this type of personality. He gives to his son an example to follow, he is the father and the teacher, to use an oft-repeated phrase of Talmudic literature. He is not cast one-sidedly in the role of one who frustrates and stands in the way of the child who knows what he wants to be. He is a necessary part, an asset rather than a liability in that process by which the child comes to learn what he wants to be. Our religious sources do not make these unconscious processes explicit, but they imply the strategic importance of the father as a moral

teacher, a guide who helps the child achieve his humanity.

There is a confidence and optimism about parent-child relationships in the Biblical sources. Just as the Biblical view of man is affirmative and hopeful, so the father is viewed as the one who teaches and blesses his sons. The father occupies a position of dignity and respect. Children, according to the fifth commandment, are bidden to honor their parents, for the elders stand almost in the place of God. (*Kiddushin* 30b).

A Talmudic source reads: "Our rabbis taught: there are three partners in man, the Holy One Blessed be He, the father, and the mother. When a man honours his father and his mother, the Holy One Blessed be He says, 'I ascribe (merit) to them as though I had dwelt among them and they had honoured me.'"

In Judaism, the presence of destructive forces in man was fully recognized, but love was destined to triumph because that was God's will and man was fully capable of living up to his own potentialities, as a child of one God, a partner with Him in the work of creation. Religion does not feel that the arbitration of a power struggle between the father and the child is the central issue. It is not a compromise that is sought but a relationship of love and responsibility. In seeking the Biblical model of the father figure, we find in Abraham—called in Jewish tradition—*avinu*—our father, the prototype of the moral teacher, the man who blessed his sons, the pioneer first to grasp the reality of the One God, the friend of God, the champion of justice.

Biblical literature reflects a patriarchal system; it no doubt enhanced a family system where fatherly authority was absolute. The laws concerning the rebellious son, Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter, the presence of legal codes, obedience to which was enforced by an uncompromising Divine King whose power was absolute—these authoritar-

ian themes are, of course, to be found in Biblical literature, but far more relevant to our needs and far more congenial to our views are other glimpses of a loving and compassionate Father in Heaven.

There are frequent comparisons between God who chastens his people out of His love and the father who chastises the son. In Proverbs 3:16 we read: "For whom the Lord loveth, He correcteth even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Also Deut. 8:5.) In the prophetic literature God the Father chastens His people out of compassionate love. In Jeremiah 31:20 we read: "Is Ephraim a darling son unto Me? Is he a child that is dandled? For as often as I speak of him I do earnestly remember him still: Therefore My heart yearneth for him. I will surely have compassion upon him, saith the Lord." The same fatherly endearments were voiced in Hosea 11:3: "And I, I taught Ephraim to walk. Taking them by their arms; but they know not that I healed them." In Psalms the pity of a father for his child is taken as a symbol of the father-son relationship (Ps. 103:13): "As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear him." A father's identification with his son appears in the words of David, mourning for Absalom (2 Sam. 19:1): "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son."

The role of the father as teacher frequently appears in the book of Proverbs in such well-known verses as 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and even when he is old, he will not depart from it" and 13:24, "He that spareth the rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." We are reminded of the values of the father's teachings by the statement: "My son keep commandment of thy father and forsake not the law of thy mother. When thou shalt walkest it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest it shall watch over thee and when

thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." The prophet Isaiah (54:13) wrote: "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children."

Other verses like those in Deuteronomy where the commandment to teach one's sons follows the call to love God with all one's heart (Deut. 6:4) remind us of the role of the father as a teacher of morality as early as Biblical times. Part of the process of education is to gain a feeling of reverence and awe for one's parents. With our contemporary appreciation of the role of family life as a possible breeding ground for neurotic conflict and for juvenile delinquency, we can appreciate the power of the statement in Malachi 3:23: "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers. Lest I come and smite the land with utter destruction."

Of particular interest to us in our preoccupation with the authority of the father are such passages as the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12) dealing with filial piety, the admonition in Ex. 21:17 against cursing one's parent, or Lev. 19:3, "Every man, his mother and his father, ye shall fear." In Jewish teaching filial piety is closely associated with the will of God. Parents must teach the child a moral code which is binding upon him and the parents. The Hebrew word for "honoring" which appears in the fifth commandment is the same word that is used to designate the glory or the power of God. It represents the *Schechinah* or divine radiance. Not mere submission to arbitrary human authority is demanded but acceptance and loyalty to the moral code and to the will of God. Of the more authoritarian passages, we might cite Ex. 34:17 with its description of God visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, a reference preceded, incidentally, with the words "merciful and gracious." That children shall not be pun-

ished for the sins of the fathers is the well-known theme of Ezekiel 18:4.

Only passing reference can be made to post-Biblical literature dealing with the role of the father. A famous passage (Kid. 29a) lists the fatherly roles most explicitly: "The father is bound in respect of his son to circumcise him, redeem him, teach him Torah, take a wife for him, and teach him a craft. Some say to teach him to swim too." He is one who initiates him into the community, provides moral instruction, helps him to build his own family, and serves as a vocational counselor. He has duties vis-a-vis his daughter too. If he was not enjoined as strongly to teach the daughter, he was to help her towards her wifely and motherly roles. The rabbis based their view on Jeremiah 29:6 and commented on the phrase "give your daughters to husbands." How was this to be done? The daughter should "be dowered, clothed, and adorned, that men should eagerly desire her." (Kid. 30b). An elaborate system of education was specified in rabbinic lore but of special interest to us is the insight concerning the extraordinary value which accrues to the son who was taught by the father. "A son who learns from his father, it is as though he had received his instruction at Mount Sinai." (Kid. 30a). Parental instruction has all the vividness and immediacy of a direct revelation of God. We close these selections from religious sources with one of the noblest formulations of the father's role (Yeb. 62b): "Our masters have taught: He who loves his wife as himself, and honours her more than himself; who leads his sons and daughters in the straight path, and marries them near their time of maturity, to his house, the words of Job (5:24) apply, 'Thou shalt know that thy tent is peace.' "

The modern Jewish family tends to take on the coloration of the middle-class American family and inherits the same role conflicts. The American Jewish family too needs

to rediscover the role of the father as teacher, as responsible authority, as limit-setter, and as a model for identification. There is little doubt that a strengthening of the role of the father is necessary for the child's emotional and moral development.

How can we persuade our children to honor their father and their mother? How can we help the modern father realize that his fatherly responsibilities are more than biological? The Rabbis taught that he who begets the child is not called father—only he who trains and raises up the child (*Shemot R. 46*). Does this not mean that we are asking children to resist enormous pressures for conformity in a commodity-centered culture? Does this not mean that we are asking the father to give to the child that which he lacks in himself—a sense of identity, a sense of confidence in his own values, and a respect for his own integrity as a man who bears the image of the Divine? The modern father is hard put to discover what it is that he himself wants to be. He is not content with the model that our culture today holds out for him. He himself suffers from what the great Protestant theologian, Paul Tillich, calls the “anxiety of doubt and meaninglessness.” He, therefore, leaves it to the “Expert”—the Rabbi—to teach his children. He has given up himself, saying, “Rabbi, I'm not religious but I want my children to have a religious education.”

Religion provides us with truths and values about the fatherly responsibilities. Modern psychiatry and social science help diagnose the ills and needs of our time. Their discoveries help us recover our own respect for religious insights. The individual and the social order are the patients. But how shall the work of healing begin? We cannot restore family values in a vacuum, nor can we neglect the individual in a program for social change. We cannot urge the parent and the child to concentrate on their

private salvation, for there can be no salvation without a sense of community and without a wise reverence for the supreme father symbol—God.

A religious view, while not a program for action, would remind us who are parents, teachers, healers, and citizens, of verities in whose defense we may never relax. Psychoanalysis unfailingly reminds us that without self-respect man is hopelessly divided against himself. We must help the child while he is still young and when the child in time becomes a father he continues to need encouragement. For such courage, we might turn to the ancient teaching which reminds man of his inviolable dignity as a child of God. According to the Mishnah (Sanh. 4:5) as interpreted by Kohler, man was created single that he might know that he forms a world for himself, and the whole creation must aid him in unfolding the divine image within himself.



# Father's Place

BY MOSES MESCHELOFF

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## Father's Place

Father's Day is a newcomer in our calendar. Until recently one parent was so honored. The second Sunday in May is known as Mother's Day. It has become a day consecrated to them, a day when we can show them our grateful affection—a love they so richly deserve. Till recently Father's role was not appreciated. Now Father assumes his honored place in the calendar of our affections.

What is the difference between Mother's Day and Father's Day? You may have read what one child had to say on the subject: "Father's Day," he said, "is just like Mother's Day, only you don't spend so much."

The Bible makes a more thoughtful distinction between our two parents. The Fifth Commandment in the Decalogue proclaims: "Honor your Father and Mother." Later on the Torah again says: "Let each man fear his mother and his father." Have you ever noticed the difference between these two Biblical commands? One speaks of honor, the other speaks of fear or reverence. When the Bible speaks of honor it says: "Honor your father and mother," placing father first. When it speaks of reverence, it places mother first: "Let each man fear his mother and his father . . ."

A great Jewish sage noted this and explained it in this way: God realized that children would quite naturally shower honors upon their mother in preference to their father. After all, isn't it Mother who becomes our first confidante? She, it is, who kisses away our tears, heals our wounds, enfolds us in her love. Mother's Day comes quite naturally. That is why God ordained: "Honor your

*father* and mother," placing father first. God says to us: Father is also entitled to *his* day. You must show him honor no less than Mother.

Now, a child looks differently at his father. Father is made of sterner stuff. He teaches the child. Sometimes he must chastise the child in the process of training and education. It is quite natural then, God says, for a child to stand in awe and fear of his father. Don't forget now, says the Bible, that Mother is entitled to this kind of respect too. That is why the Bible places her first when it decrees: "Let every child fear his *mother* and his father . . ."

Speaking of these two verses, note that the Bible doesn't content itself with saying "love your parents," or "give them an occasional gift." The Bible requires that we give them honor, respect and reverence. This is a command of a different quality. Some children really think that all parents want of them is to be humored or to give a gift and some show of affection.

Too many children assume a superior attitude towards their parents. They think that they can bribe them with an occasional "good time." They don't realize how much they hurt their parents when they disregard their advice and refuse to take their direction. The Bible, therefore, stresses the words "honor" and "fear." Parents must be given esteem and respect. This is the place which Judaism reserves for our parents. And Father's Day gives us an opportunity to teach us this and to accept this approach today and every day.

The Talmud illustrates what I have been trying to say with two anecdotes. It asks: How is it possible for a child who gives his father everything to be punished by God, while another child who puts his father to hard labor is rewarded by the Almighty?

Once upon a time, it answers, there was a young man who fed his father with stuffed fowl and showered other

extravagances upon him. But God sent him down to purgatory. Why? Well, one fine day his father asked, "My son, where do you get the money to feed me so royally?" The son answered him harshly: "Old man, ask me no questions. Just eat and be quiet. I feed my dogs, too, and they ask me no questions." Such a man, says the Talmud, will receive his penalty down below . . .

On the other hand, there was a farmer who made his father work all day at his mill, yet, God rewarded him with Paradise. Do you know why? The king had sent out an edict that all unemployed men must work in the royal granary. The son, fearing that his father might be called up, said to him, "Dear Father, please take my place here at the mill. I shall go up and work for the king. If there will be insults hurled at the laborers, let me be the one to be insulted—not you. If the king's overseers rain blows down upon the workmen, let me receive those blows—not you." This man, says the Talmud, will receive his ample reward in the future world.

So you see, this is how we are to honor father on this day. God won't weigh our little deeds alone. He will look into our hearts and measure the spirit with which we show true respect and reverence to him who gave us the spark of life.

I shall never forget the unfortunate woman who came to my study a few years back with tears in her eyes. She was a poor woman, with barely enough for a roof over her head, a modest wardrobe and some meager food. This, she explained, she could take as the will of God. Why then did she come to me? "I have a son," she said, "who owns two apartment houses, lives in luxury, has everything he needs or wants. He knows my desperate situation, but he will not help me with one cent. What can I do, Rabbi?" I discussed the matter with an attorney. He explained to me that there are statutes which compel parents to meet

their responsibilities to their children, but the courts do not recognize a child's duties for the support of a parent.

The Bible is so much more merciful in such matters. Our faith teaches us that we do have primary responsibilities towards our parents. We must not only honor and respect them; we must see to it that they have their needs supplied; if not we are guilty. As much as parents are responsible for their children's needs, so are the children to supply the needs of their parents.

Judaism, then, tells us that there is an interrelation between parents and children. That means that on Father's Day there should be a message for the father, too. And there definitely is:

I hope you don't mind, Dad, if I ask you a personal question. Have you been all that a father should be? There are some fathers who abdicate their place in the family. A noted judge recently wrote that the responsibility of juvenile delinquency can frequently be laid at the feet of fathers who failed to discipline their children, and yielded their place to the mother. They have defaulted their role of teacher and removed the keystone in the structure of the family.

Recently I read one of Art Linkletter's anecdotes concerning children. He writes of the youngster who had four brothers and three sisters. He asked him:

"How do you decide who does the chores around the house?"

The lad answered, "We have a council meeting—just like the government."

"Who is the president?"

"My mother, of course," he said.

"Who is the vice president?"

"All the rest of us are vice presidents—except Dad."

"Why, where is he?"

"Dad? He is in the living room watching the fights on TV."

Now, there you have a father who has abdicated his office. He has forced his reins of government upon his wife. As a result, there is much that children will miss. And there will come the day when that dad will miss much of his children!

Every so often a father comes to me in bitter resentment. He tells me, "I always dreamed of the day when my son would join me in my business. All these years I have waited for the time when I could add the words 'and son' on my stationery. But my son doesn't care about my business. He isn't interested in my problems. He acts like a stranger to me. Why is he like that?"

I try to retrace this father's years with him. I say to him, "Did you add the words 'and son' to your life while your child was young? Did you join the words 'Father and son' in his problems while he was growing up? Was it 'Father and son' at religious services and family worship? If you were not partners all these years, then you should not expect him to be interested in a partnership with you now."

Centuries ago the great Rabbi Akiva said: "A father bestows upon his son five gifts: his appearance, his strength, wealth, wisdom and longevity." Modern genetics teaches us that most of these attributes are the gift of the father from the moment of conception. But this is not where the father and son relationship should end. Each of these qualities must be guarded and guided through the child's formative years. Teaching us how to put our faculties and talents to the best use—that is the duty of a real father. All too many cases of juvenile delinquency are brought about because the father abdicated his place and permitted the same talents to become a source of greater wrong-doing and of increased misery for the child and others.

So, fathers and sons, today is the day for the renewal of contracts between ourselves. Within our homes lie the potentialities for the development of love and respect of reverence and responsibility. Within the home the father takes his place as teacher and provider, as molder of the entire life of his children.

On Father's Day, let us all sign this "Father's and child's" contract. If we both keep our part of this agreement, then God will keep His, inscribed on the sacred tablets of the Law: "Honor your father and your mother, then your days will be long upon the land which the Lord your God has given you."



# Her Children Call Her Blessed

BY ABRAHAM B. SHOULSON

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## Her Children Call Her Blessed

Mother's Day is a characteristic American institution. In the hustle and bustle of our daily life, we pause for this one day in the year to concentrate our attention upon the place of Mother in our lives. This observance came into being as an outward expression of the inner feelings and sentiments of the American people. The first formal observance of Mother's Day was held fifty years ago in the city of Philadelphia. It has now grown into an important holiday, proclaimed annually by the President of the United States who urges the people "by prayer, by our devotion to duty and evidences of affection, to give expression to our love and reverence for America's Mothers." It is today an important institution in more than forty other countries as well.

We note that this observance was born and nurtured in the Houses of God of our country. It is the result of the essentially religious spirit of the American people. This beautiful American observance of Mother's Day is yet another illustration of the deep religious roots of the American culture as we know it today. This is a day of earnest reflection—an awakening of deep understanding of love between a mother and her children. The very nature of this concept, therefore, should be one of a spiritual feeling as well as an awareness of helping to promote communal activities so that this day will continue to have greater and greater significance for us all. The institution of Mother's Day is an expression of the basic principle that reverence and love for our parents constitutes the basis of our spiritual life. Everything that is fine and noble in us isulti-

mately derived from these basic sentiments. Our mothers, our wives and our sisters are the bearers of a divine message of blessing, demonstrating to us the reality of love and the profound worthwhileness of life. The influence of the Jewish mother in our lives is well symbolized by her kindling of the Sabbath and Festival lights. "This is symbolic of the Jewish woman's influence on her own home, and through it upon larger circles." She is the inspirer of a pure, chaste family life whose hallowing influences are incalculable; she is the center of all spiritual endeavors, the confidante and fosterer of every undertaking. To her the Talmudic sentence applies: "It is woman alone through whom God's blessings are vouchsafed to a house." The family is gathered around the table and it is the lot of the Jewish mother that to her falls the beautiful custom of lighting the holy tapers, and thus the entire home becomes illuminated in a Divine light which sheds a warm glow upon the faces of all within the family circle.

In truth, it is the Jewish mother who brings the light of health, of love, of sympathy, of consolation, of inspiration, of understanding and of true religion into the lives of her husband and her children. It is no wonder, then, that when the great Rabbi Joseph of the Talmud heard his mother's approaching footsteps he did stand up with the expression: "Let me rise before the Divine Presence which is about to enter." He intended no gushing sentiment here. He spoke to the heart of the Mother as Judaism sees it.

Judaism has shunned the "secular ballyhoo" which has gradually turned the observance of Mother's Day into a businessman's holiday that produces millions of dollars in gift sales annually, with fifty-five million families spending an average of sixteen dollars each for mothers, grandmothers, and mothers-in-law. Judaism has rather spoken in simple and

yet vital words on the subject which are meant to keep it within the religious and idealistic bounds.

At the outset of the Bible, Mother Eve gives expression to the very essence of motherhood as she names her first son with the words: "I have fashioned a man with the help of the Lord." The Mother was endowed from the very beginning of creation with a spiritual nature akin to God, doing the work of God by bringing life into the world. The Mother—and the Father—are the agents of God, doing His work. There is nothing more divine and more sacred than that. Giving reverence to Mother is really giving reverence to life itself; honoring Mother is honoring and respecting humanity.

Special mention is made in Biblical and Talmudic literature of the motherly virtues of the Bible's foremost heroines. Honor is paid Sarah for the pioneering devotion that motivated her to follow Abraham through urban and metropolitan wilderness to the Promised Land; but it is as the first matriarch in Israel, as the mother of her people, that her praises have been sung through the centuries. Rebecca, wife of Isaac, the second matriarch and mother of Jacob, cherished her youngest son perhaps too much; but the human touch has traditionally softened the censure of her deceit of the aging Isaac. Rachel, the third matriarch and mother of Joseph and Benjamin; and Leah, the fourth matriarch, produced the "tribes" that established—in history and legend—the divine right of the Jewish People to the ancient homeland. Jochebed was revered as the mother whose clever concealment of her baby Moses provided her people with a savior in their hour of great need; and Miriam, her daughter, had a grandson, Bezalel, who was noted as the first great Jewish artist, designer and architect of the Tabernacle, wherein the children of Israel worshipped on their trek toward the Promised Land. They vie in the homage paid by tradition with Ruth, whose

great-grandson, David, became the greatest of Jewish kings, and the two Hannahs—the first, the mother who dedicated her son, Samuel, to prophecy; the second, the mother who proudly sacrificed her seven sons that Antiochus Epiphanes' profanations might be nullified to the glorification and perpetuation of her people and their right to worship God. Ranked among the great in Israel's spiritual history are Deborah, Abigail, Huldah and Esther.

What a mighty contrast to the role of women as they are portrayed in Greek and Roman cultures. Plato classed women as equals with children and servants. Xenophon, in setting the ideal type of wife, suggested that "she is one brought up that she might see, hear, and ask as little as possible." On the other hand, our sages teach us that the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt because of the true and righteous women among them. Saint Clement even proposed "every woman ought to be filled with shame at the thought that she is woman." What a far cry is that from the sentiments expressed in the Alphabetic Ode to the "Woman of Valor" found in Proverbs. Here we have depicted for us the woman of worth whose price is far above rubies! She has nobility of character, she is industrious and wise, she possesses loving kindness and her children rise up and call her blessed!

Although women took no official part in conducting the services of the traditional synagogue any more than they participated in the ritual of the National Sanctuaries that preceded it, their presence among the worshippers in both Temples was well evidenced and their influence deeply felt. In the Temple of Jerusalem, which was copied by the lesser Jewish houses of worship in the Diaspora that replaced it, a special section was reserved for the women who came to bring their offerings at the Holy Place.

Donna Gracia Nassi, the Jewish noblewoman of Constantinople, was called "Mother of the Synagogue" on account

of her munificence to the Jewish Houses of Prayer in her city. Women always had members of their own sex who were well versed in the Service of the Synagogue. Thus, while women were not included in the quorum required for public worship, they nevertheless contributed heavily to synagogue attendance on the Sabbaths and festivals, thereby adding tremendously to the warmth and fervor of the synagogue services. In our own day and age, the presence of women in the synagogue is more valued than ever before and the influence they can wield is incalculable.

The function of the mother is unique even as compared with that of the father. Her close contact with the child during his formative years gives her the responsibility for his physical, mental and spiritual development. Her position as mistress of the home makes possible the planting of wholesome and inspiring memories which will in later years gratefully be called to the foreground of his consciousness. The tendency which every son and daughter has to magnify the virtues of Mother results in the building of an ideal personality which the child is ready to revere and worship. To do this the Ten Commandments ordains; and the Bible and our Tradition testify it.

Mother's Day teaches us that in many areas of human relationship we ought to learn not to be ashamed to express our affections and our sentiments. This is particularly true in our family relationships where we come in daily contact with those who are closest and dearest to our hearts. Mother's Day gives us the opportunity to express our warm love to those most deserving of our love—our mothers. We need not feel shy or reticent or ashamed to reveal that which we feel in our hearts for our mothers. Let us frankly acknowledge to them what they mean to us and then let us proceed to demonstrate our affections in whatever concrete way that suits our taste. We want to remember the love which our mothers lavished upon us,

the appreciation we feel for them in the suffering they endured to rear us and the many benefits which are ours as a result of their teachings. But perhaps the finest tribute to our mothers is not so much the recognition of past favors granted to us as what we can do for the future to keep alive and vibrant the things for which our mothers stand or have stood for. In a sense, we reflect in our lives those things which were important enough to them to want to instill in us. And there could be no better way of honoring our parents than honoring in our lives the principles for which our parents stood. In terms of Judaism, the mother who sacrificed so that her child would reflect a Jewish life in the best sense of the word can best be honored by striving to be that kind of a Jew. In a sense Mother's Day should be a kind of "dedication day" to remind us of what mothers have instilled in us and to resolve to live by and transmit to our progeny these same guiding principles.

Mothers have a great responsibility in this regard to always remain the guide, the teacher, and the symbol of all that is good and noble in life. Mothers must never allow for a change of roles. Parents should bring up their children; children must not be allowed to bring up their parents. It was the famous Athenian, General Themistocles, who, when praised as the most powerful man in the world, pointed to his little son as more powerful than he. "You see," he said, "the Athenians rule the world. I rule the Athenians. My wife rules me. And this little boy rules his mother."

Mother-love must never mean weakness. It must always imply strength to face up to the responsibility of molding a child's character and guiding him in the proper channels of living. Mother's Day will have greater significance for us when we learn to understand the deeper meaning

of the "Little Parable for Mothers," by Shirley Bailey Temple.

The young Mother set her foot on the path of life.

"Is the way long?" she asked.

And her Guide said: "Yes. And the way is hard. And you will be old before you reach the end of it. But the end will be better than the beginning."

But the young Mother was happy and she would not believe that anything could be better than these years. So she played with her children, and gathered flowers for them along the way, and bathed with them in the clear streams; and the sun shone on them, and life was good, and the young Mother cried, "Nothing will ever be lovelier than this."

Then night came, and storm, and the path was dark, and the children shook with fear and cold, and the Mother drew them close and covered them with her mantle, and the children said, "Oh, Mother, we are not afraid, for you are near, and no harm can come." And the Mother said, "This is better than the brightness of day, for I have taught my children courage."

And the morning came, and there was a hill ahead, and the children climbed and grew weary, and the Mother was weary, but at all times she said to the children, "A little patience and we are there." So the children climbed, and when they reached the top, they said, "We could not have done it without you, Mother." And the Mother, when she lay down that night, looked up at the stars and said: "This is a better day than the last, for my children have learned fortitude in the face of hardness. Yesterday I gave them courage. Today I have given them strength."

And the next day came strange clouds which darkened the earth—clouds of war and hate and evil, and the chil-

dren groped and stumbled, and the Mother said: "Look up. Lift up your eyes to the Light."

And the children looked and saw above the clouds an Everlasting Glory, and it guided them and brought them beyond the darkness. And that night the Mother said, "This is the best day of all, for I have shown my children God."

And the days went on, and the weeks and the months and the years, and the Mother grew old, and she was little and bent. But her children were tall and strong, and walked with courage. and when the way was hard, they helped their Mother; and when the way was rough, they lifted her, for she was as light as a feather; and at last they came to a hill, and beyond the hill they could see a shining road and golden gates flung wide.

And the Mother said: "I have reached the end of my journey. And now I know that the end is better than the beginning, for my children can walk alone, and their children after them."

And the children said, "You will always walk with us, Mother, even when you have gone through the gates." And they stood and watched as she went on alone, and the gates closed after her. And they said: "We cannot see her, but she is with us still. A Mother like ours is more than a Memory. She is a Living Presence."



# Our Gallant American Jewish Mothers

BY RICHARD C. HERTZ

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## Our Gallant American Jewish Mothers

Mother's Day is a time when we salute gallant mothers, young and old, who are the defenders of the family and custodians of Judaism's ancient heritage. They transmit to the new generation the ideals of family love and the values of family spirit, cherished by Jews through a hundred generations of history. They have always been, these wonderful mothers, the guardians of kindness, gentleness and humaneness. Even when the men were busy with thoughts of war, whether military warfare or economic warfare, it was the mothers who kept peace in the home and gave to family life its character, its warmth, its love, its integrity.

Yet, it is time we developed a new procedure. Instead of offering sweet, maudlin sentiments about how wonderful motherhood is and how perfect all mothers are, Mother's Day ought to be a time when these mothers are charged anew with their responsibilities as women. We not only heap praise on them, but we remind them too that their basic tasks are never finished. With the world in crisis, society is looking to the women to stabilize stormy spots of life and to bring equilibrium, balance, kindness, gentleness and peace into the lives of the next generation.

Whether in Temple organizations or in the Jewish home, whether singly or grouped together, they are Jewish women—and more particularly American women. As Jewish women they are subject to all the problems and pressures that befall our people (and others have dilated upon these issues elsewhere in this book). They are also American women. As such, they are subject to all of the tensions and changes that have come to this generation of discon-

tented, restive American women. About this problem—the ordeal of the American woman—I have something to say.

## I

In his great book on *America as a Civilization*, Max Lerner has a brilliant chapter entitled, "The Ordeal of the American Woman." There he summarizes dozens of the most authoritative sociologists and distills their essence into one brief chapter. Max Lerner puts the American woman's ordeal this way: "Rarely in historic civilization have women been as free, expressive and powerful as in America: yet rarely also has the burden of being a woman and trying to be a fulfilled one been as heavy to carry." (Page 599.) The American woman has a paradox of many roles to resolve. She is torn between vying with men for jobs, a career, business, and government and still finding her identity as a wife, a mother, and a woman. Whether a stenographer or a society belle, a shop girl or a movie queen, she is known the world over for her smartness and verve. "The American look" is not only envied and emulated but criticized as well, for it is a distinctly different look from that of a Roman woman, the Chinese, British, Latin or Russian woman. Foreign commentators think the American woman is idle, wasteful and pampered; but if she has less stamina than the pioneer woman of a century ago, she has also taken on jobs and problems her grandmother never dreamed of. She has new roles, new rights, new privileges, new responsibilities. She has a position in society equalled by few if any other women of the world.

One story will illustrate the difference between American women and the women abroad. An old Arab trader who used to ride on his donkey very peacefully while his wife walked behind him with all the family possessions piled on her head and under her arms was visited by a

war correspondent, who went back to North Africa after the last war. There he found that woman had improved her lot among the Arabs. A man still rode on his donkey, but now the woman walked in front of the donkey with the packages all on her head. The war correspondent said to the Arab, "Abdul, I see you've promoted woman in your scheme of things. The woman now walks ahead of you instead of behind you!" And Abdul replied, "Ah yes! You see, in this territory from the war there are still many unexploded mines." American women don't have that problem.

Without exploding any mines or booby traps, the American woman has undergone a continuous series of revolutions, or rather a series of feminine revolutions which have transformed their roles and functions:

(1) *The suffrage revolution* was a long, hard-fought battle for equal rights. The American woman won the right to an equal education with men, to speak in public, to vote and hold office. During the first quarter of the 20th Century, the American woman strove mightily for equal rights with men. Now that she has these rights, she is beginning to wonder whether they were worth the fight.

(2) *A revolution of morals and sex* directed against the double standards of morality has given the American woman a new social and personal freedom.

(3) *The revolution of manners and customs* enabled woman to shed her cumbersome garments and take part in sports, drive cars, pilot planes, serve in the WACS, WAVES, smoke cigarettes, and drink in public. She seeks to wear the right things, whether it is for work or play, relaxing or entertaining, afternoon or evening. Though she tries to be smartly dressed, she remains a gullible prey to the apparel industry, which has successfully made the American woman think that whatever she has from last year is already obsolete.

(4) *The kitchen revolution* has given woman greater leisure and enabled others to get industrial and clerical jobs outside and still manage the home. Before the kitchen revolution, the middle-class woman of America was a household drudge. Now with laundry machines, dishwashing machines, cooking devices, deep-freeze canned foods, frozen foods, and a host of other short-cuts to gracious living, the machine has brought to the home new levels of social experience, and released for the emancipated woman a new area of personal expressiveness.

(5) *The job revolution* transformed the American working force and woman's role in the American economy at the same time. In 1920, there were eight million women holding jobs. In 1955, there were twenty-seven million, comprising over thirty percent of the labor force.

The succession of these revolutions liberated and transformed the American woman. At a convention of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in Philadelphia recently, the national president, Mrs. Hiram Cole Houghton of Red Oak, Iowa, said, "Women in the United States are more important than ever because of five reasons: (1) There are so many of us; (2) we live longer than men; (3) we have 92 labor-saving devices to give us more leisure time; (4) we spend about 85¢ out of every dollar going for consumer goods (and we suggest what men should do with the remaining 15¢); (5) we own most of the factories, stores, utilities and natural resources." (*Chicago Sun-Times*, Oct. 9, 1951.)

While the American woman's position has never been more secure, economically speaking, culturally she has become not only the integrator and organizer of economic consumption but also the conveyor of culture as well. Still, despite her security, her cultural interests, her household freedom, her community opportunity, the American woman

feels a sense of inner emptiness. Our grandmothers were too busy bearing children, raising them, educating them, marrying them, and then visiting the grandchildren ever to become discontented with life. The unhappy wife has become a characteristic of American culture. In her new-found leisure she feels both trivial and unappreciated. At least what grandma was doing looked like big, conspicuous work. She had a house to clean, bread to bake, canning to do at certain seasons, perhaps a vegetable garden to tend, clothes to make and mend. When the American woman has finished a week, all she can do is say that she shopped at the supermarket, called the plumber and the electrician, turned on the washing machine, opened a few cans, excavated the deep freeze, chauffeured the children, been a den mother, visited on the telephone, and all in all somehow managed to get through the week only to start out all over again, exhausted, Monday morning. Her destiny seems fated to deliver children—obstetrically once and by car forever after. The feeling that life and happiness have passed her by gnaws within her, and often she is forced back into a neurotic world of plays, movies, novels, soap operas and TV make-believe (or perhaps into psychoanalysis).

With all that she has, the American woman is still discontented. To become a real person with a fruitful life of her own has been something of an ordeal for the American woman, passing through a series of revolutions and cycles in the life pattern. But she has succeeded better than many, a woman will privately admit; that she is finding herself by losing herself; that she has come into her own despite the ordeal—all this is evidenced by the testimony of millions of American women who are the envy and the pattern of the rest of the world. The American woman has changed for the better, but change is never easy, nor does it ever come without the effort or the ordeal.

The ancient rabbis tell about a pious man who was married to a pious woman. Being childless after many years, they divorced one another. He went and married a wicked woman, and he became a wicked man. His former wife went and married a wicked man, but she made him into a righteous man. It follows, commented the rabbis, that it "all depends upon the woman." (Gen. R. 17.7.)

## II

Look for a moment at the influence of the American woman as a mother in the early years of our lives.

In all the psychological and psychiatric studies coming out in the field of child development, it is repeatedly being pointed out that the parents, and particularly the mother, play the dominant role in the evolution of the child's emotions, his personality, and his adjustment to his social environment. The nervous mother should not be surprised to end up with a nervous child. Insecurity and emotional imbalance in the parents are reflected in the child. The child's mental health begins with the mother. The parent's personality disturbances end up in the child.

A time like Mother's Day makes mother and father realize that children, after all, are entrusted to our care not that they might serve us in life or take care of us in old age or say *Kaddish* at our grave, but in order that we may create worthy vessels for carrying on our name and the human race . . . new personalities enriched by loving care and security . . . combining the best qualities of each parent into a oneness of mind and spirit that is the achievement of true marriage.

We are hearing from parents that it's up to the religious school to give the children a sense of reverence for God and for decency. Who should nurture the children these days? School administrators hear from parents that it's

up to the schools to make decent citizens of the young. One school principal was asked by a group of parents why the school didn't make more of their children than it was making. The principal replied: "Because they are *your* children!"

If a child feels loved and secure and trusted, he will probably be able to be loving and generous and trusting towards others. Family life should give the child the occasions and the opportunities to develop independence, responsibility, self-confidence, self-reliance, kindness, consideration and all the other kindred qualities that real character includes. Yes, character begins at home. There is no substitute for family life.

Margaret Mead writes that the life of any family is something like a ship which may be wrecked by any turn of the tide in rocky waters unless every member of the family, but especially the two parents, are actively and cooperatively engaged in sailing the boat, vigilantly tacking, trimming their sails, resetting their course, bailing out in storms—all to save something worth their continuous care. This is the ideal of the family working together to keep alive something worthwhile. The family unit is one of the things that matters most in our lives. (Margaret Mead, *American Journal of Sociology*, May, 1948, p. 459.)

The family unit is not built by what parents *have* but with what they *are*. If you want to know why so many young people grow up with a "get rich quick" view of life, that the world owes them a living, that "getting away with something and not getting caught" is the key to success, maybe it is because fathers exalt schemes to get rich instead of becoming enriched by a noble scheme of life. Maybe it is because mothers drift from luncheon to canasta tables instead of giving themselves to some form of humanitarian service. Unworthy sons and daughters are not

necessarily the offspring of unworthy parents but unwise parents.

Victor Hugo once pointed out a civilization is judged by the place it gives the mother and child. In doing honor to motherhood we show the caliber of our civilization . . . and it is about time we did something to improve it.

### III

Could it be that this accounts in part for the miracle of Jewish survival?

The idea of Mother's Day, though free of any denominational label, has an especial appeal to Jews. The Jewish mother—the mother in Israel—has long held in Jewish tradition an honored place. We had our place for mother long before Miss Jarvis hit upon this scheme. The Jewish mother was and is the central heroine of the Jewish family.

When we Jews speak with justifiable pride about the Jewish heart and the Jewish family as noble values, we can be accused of partiality for setting up the defense mechanism of an over-active mass inferiority complex that we Jews often exhibit. But when non-Jews point with pride to the Jewish family, then we know we are not exaggerating or overstating the situation.

What is so special about the Jewish family? Is it any accident that among Jewish families divorces are fewer, delinquency lower, crime rates and prison records fewer? I think not; for the answer, I believe, lies in the Jewish family.

We pride ourselves on being a people who honor the family man and woman. Indeed, the mother is the key person in the family situation. She cultivates many virtues, but the proudest one she wears—the one that sums up all others is her "Jewish heart." You often hear people say, "She has a good Jewish heart." Did you ever stop to think

what that means? A good Jewish heart isn't bought in a store, nor learned in books. It is something special, deep down under, cultivated in the family, nurtured by one's mother.

#### IV

I asked someone recently what is so appealing about Molly Goldberg on TV. She seems to epitomize, sometimes even stereotype, so many Jewish characteristics. They answered, "She portrays the mother with 'the good Jewish heart.'"

The Jewish heart knows the quality of mercy. Compassion runs through the arteries. A love of justice is pumped into the blood stream. Charity—the desire to help the needy and the unfortunate—is the very essence of its heart-beating, and it beats in time with other Jewish hearts, linking the Jew with the whole Jewish people. Brotherly feeling, not only for other Jews, but for any underdog, anyone dealt cruel blows by the selfish or tyrannical or the powerful—somehow or other finds within the Jewish heart a response, arousing the whole body to action.

In an inexplicable way, this Jewish heart is transmitted from generation to generation by the mother. From her come qualities of tenderness and close family feelings, of concern one for the other, of devotion to family solidarity, the spirit of *The Three Musketeers*—"all for one and one for all." Where do we learn these wonderful values, but from mother?

Jews have long understood that from the family—and especially from the mother—our people have received their earliest and deepest convictions about that to which they are committed. The strongest incentives to the development of character, of loyalty to the good, the true, the beautiful, of devotion to what is highest and noblest in life—these incentives come from the house and the family.

There, it is not always what is argued and discussed as what is assumed that is of lasting importance.

One example, cited by Elton and Pauline Trueblood in their little volume *The Recovery of Family Life*, is worth remembering. The argument over the wisdom or value of regular attendance at religious services is almost trivial in comparison with the enduring effect of a steady habit on the part of the parents, from the time even before the child can remember. Example is the great teacher—the example we set for our children. Or again: it is more important for a child to grow up in a family where it is always expected that he will keep his promises than to force him to hear nineteen sermons on promise-keeping. There is a power in expectancy—expecting a person to do that which is right and decent—convicting him of his own potential expectancy.

Yet, there is no magic about the mother, the family, or the Jewish heart. These can be ideals of wonderful affection. We know too that there can be selfish mothers, unhappy families, hard-hearted, heartless hearts among Jews. The ideal mother with the Jewish heart does not come to be without the accumulation of Jewish tradition.

The Jewish mother of today walks in the footsteps of Queen Esther, who learned that identification with her people was her destiny of greatness. From Ruth, the ancient Moabitess, the Jewish mother of today understands that God is the God of all people; one universal God of mankind, in whose sight all His children are brethren. From Naomi, mother-in-law of Ruth, today's Jewish mother learns that no matter whom her son or daughter marries, in-laws must become in-loves. From the mother of Samuel, childless for so long, the modern mother learns the sacredness of bringing forth life and consecrating that new life to the service of God and man. From the unknown writers of Proverbs, 31, she discovers the pattern of what constitutes

a woman of valour whose "price is far above rubies . . . who doeth good and not evil all the days of her life."

Yes, the Jewish mother—lovable, yet loving more than she is loved—caring more, doing more—ministers in a sacred manner to the Jewish family. You think Rabbis alone are ministers of Judaism? You mothers are doing more to cement the foundations of Jewish survival by your ministrations of "tender loving care" than all the Rabbis and teachers and sages put together. For without mothers, even God would be hard put. Indeed, the ancient Rabbis said that God could not be everywhere, and so He created mothers.

### THE GIFT

God thought to give the sweetest things  
    In His almighty power  
To earth; and deeply pondering  
    What it should be—one hour  
In fondest joy and love of heart  
    Outweighing every other,  
He moved the gates of heaven apart  
    And gave to earth—a Mother!

—Author Unknown

### V

One final word by way of summing up.

We have noted that Jewish mothers are also women, American women, subject to all the pressures and tensions, the revolutionary changes and discontentments which have compounded the ordeal of the American woman. Still, they exert a tremendous influence in the home and in the family. The mother's values, her spirit of courage, make or break the character of her children. The Jewish people has always found strength and stability from the quality of the Jewish home and the spirit of the Jewish family. Today's Jewish mother, heir to all who have walked before her, is an

American woman who finds herself at home in two cultures, two civilizations. Her "Jewish heart," however, helps add another dimension to being a modern American mother.

This tribute is dedicated to our gallant American Jewish mothers. Without them, without their spirit of the Jewish heart, there would be no Jewish family, an idea we Jews are rightfully proud of. Let this then be dedicated to more than sweet sentiment. Let it be a time to remember, before it is too late.



# What Should a Father Give to His Children?

BY LEONARD B. GEWIRTZ

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## What Should a Father Give to His Children?

In a commercial society, where every value can be bought or sold at a good price, it is natural that the haberdasheries and gift shops are the most important proponents and promoters of Father's Day. However, the most important things in life, like love, friendship, and loyalty cannot be purchased at any price. If Father's Day has any significance beyond its commercial value, the meaning of this day lies in the intangible, personal, and spiritual values. If this day does mean something to fathers and children, it must be a symbol of these non-commercial, personal, and spiritual values. Keeping this basic approach in mind, let us discuss the father-child relationship and see what a father should do for his children.

We will take our text from Genesis 25:5. "And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac." There were three things that Abraham gave to Isaac.

Firstly, according to the Talmud, Abraham gave Isaac the material "inheritance." He gave him the Promised Land (Gen. 15:7), the Land of Israel, which the Lord gave to Abraham. It is the desire of every father to give to his child or children the benefits of material wealth. We want to give to our children the "Promised Land," we want to make things comfortable for them so that they live in "a land flowing with milk and honey."

The fathers and mothers, who were children of immigrant parents, remember the hardships and difficulties in which they were raised. They remember very sympathetically the heroic efforts of their parents who tried to provide

food, clothing, shelter, and education for their families above subsistence levels. Our young parents today remember the depression of the thirties and the difficult struggle their parents had to provide for them during those lean days.

I detect an obsession in many modern parents who lived through these lean years, as they declare: "I want to give everything to my children which my parents could not give to me." One father confessed to me that it was this obsessive feeling which motivated him to provide his son with a two-wheel bicycle, a TV for his bedroom, sports equipment, and a summer in camp. The father has been doing this with great difficulty.

Parents offer these material benefits with great abandon and feel deeply guilty when they cannot keep up with advertised standards. No doubt fathers should feel the responsibility to provide the best they can afford for their children. This is very commendable. A father who takes money away from the family budget for gambling and drinking is committing a great crime and sins against his children by depriving them of their birthright.

On the other hand, the father who goes beyond his financial means and ability to give his children those material wants which he cannot afford, teaches his children foolish vanity and gives them a false sense of values. He gives them the impression that material pleasures are the most important things in life. One father came to me very depressed. He said: "I cannot give my son an Oldsmobile for his date." What a foolish father! He was teaching his son that a two-tone car is the most desirable thing in the world.

Fathers, let us keep a healthy perspective and a balanced view on things. Like father Abraham, we want to give all that we have to our Isaacs. But we need not and should not give *more than we have* to our children. We should

not give false, materialist values to our children by emphasizing their importance.

Secondly, our text teaches us about another quality which Abraham gave to Isaac. The medieval commentator, Rashi, says in quoting the Midrash, that Abraham gave Isaac all his blessings which he, Abraham, received from God. "Now the Lord said unto Abraham: I will bless thee . . . and be thou a blessing . . . and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12.1, 2, 3.)

Though Abraham gave Isaac a "land flowing with milk and honey," though he provided his son with his material needs, Abraham did not neglect to impart to his son the spiritual blessings from God, "Abraham gave *all* that he had to Isaac." Abraham gave Isaac the Divine blessings.

Modern fathers are neglectful in their great responsibility to hand down to their children their spiritual legacy. Modern fathers are careful to supervise the physical needs of their children; they are indifferent to the spiritual needs of their children.

American parents are dedicated to giving those material benefits to their children which the parents as children did not receive. My suggestion to these parents is: *Give to your children those spiritual benefits that you did receive from your parents!*

Our parents might not have provided the luxuries which we consider as necessities today, but they did provide the love, the attention, the interest, the spiritual warmth that made family life a wonderful experience and an everlasting memory. What they could not offer in material comforts they gave in spiritual influence.

At our tables our children receive the best meats and varieties of entrées and desserts; at our parents' tables we received also the *Hamozi* before the meal and the *Birchas Hamazon*, the thanksgiving Grace after the meals.

I have a suspicion that many fathers who realize their negligence in providing the proper religious environment at home compensate for this by stuffing their children with more material pleasures than they really need. Just as our parents made up for the loss of material pleasures by adding to our spiritual needs, so do the modern parents compensate for the deficiency in their children's religious diet with more material pleasures.

Modern fathers could gain much from the second legacy that Abraham gave to Isaac. Let us give our children the religious blessing we have inherited from our fathers.

### III

Lastly, our text teaches us about a third quality which Abraham gave to Isaac. For this we go to the *Zohar*, the medieval source-book of *Kabbalah* mysticism.

The *Zohar* says: "A secret of highest religion did he give Isaac: 'That Isaac should achieve that measure of self-fulfillment which is fitting for himself.'"

Abraham left Isaac with the teaching that he should *live up* to his own innate greatness and that he fulfill his potentialities as a person.

This teaching is very relevant to us in this epoch of suburban-conformity and organizational anonymity.

Abraham did not advise Isaac, as Willy Loman did his son in *Death of a Salesman*: "Mix with the right people; sell yourself; join the crowd; don't utter unpopular opinions; be friendly and be popular." Abraham leaves behind a bit of advice that is to be expected from the man who left his father's house, his birthplace, to go forth to spread a new idea, a new belief, a new vision. Abraham wants his son to be true to his authentic self, to be honest with his inner self and secret needs.

I heard a father advising his son to study electrical engineering because the salary was very good and the corporations were grabbing engineers in their senior years. This boy had no inclination for the field, but he loved literature and philosophy.

I related to the father the story told about the great Chassidic teacher, Sussya of Annopol. The Tzadik of Annopol taught: "When I shall appear before the heavenly throne I shall be asked, 'Why weren't you as great as Abraham?' And I will answer fearlessly: 'Because I am not an Abraham!' When they will ask me 'Why were you not like Moses?' I will answer fearlessly, 'Because I am not a Moses.' When they will ask me, 'Why were you not like Rabbi Akiba?' I will answer, 'I am not an Akiba.'

"But what shall I answer them when they'll ask me 'Sussya of Annopol! Why were you not Sussya of Annopol?'"

The greatest responsibility a father has today is to teach his child to be himself: to teach a child to avoid conformity; to teach a child to live up to his own essential personality; to teach a child to live up to his own destiny. This is the third great responsibility a father has towards his child.

"And Abraham gave *all* that he had unto Isaac." He gave him truly everything.

Because he offered Isaac *himself* as the example! He offered Isaac the secret to his life: to achieve in life what is within one and what one can become!

A father cannot live the life for his child. But he can equip him with the courage, the strength, the discipline, the morality, the duty, to meet life's challenges, to accept them, and to overcome them. A father can give his child the love for truth and the devotion to his inner self. A father can equip his child with the spiritual underpinnings to face life and fulfill his personal destiny.

This last quality is the loftiest of the three.

As we celebrate Father's Day, let us remember these *three* gifts that Abraham gave to Isaac:

Father Abraham provided for his child's material welfare.

Father Abraham provided for his child's spiritual welfare.

Father Abraham provided for his child's personal growth and maturity.



# What Shall We Teach Our Children?

BY SYLVAN D. SCHWARTZMAN

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## What Shall We Teach Our Children?

More and more, people are coming to realize that lack of religious faith is one of modern man's most acute problems. Not only is this evident in national and international affairs, but even in the realm of personal living. For there are far too many rootless, insecure, fearful folk whose inner spiritual resources are not sufficient to sustain them in these critical times, and the words of the Prophet Isaiah come as a grim reminder to all of us—"If ye have not faith, ye shall not be preserved." (Isaiah 7:9.)

Hence, there is new urgency to the task of religious education. It must provide this generation of our children with a much deeper sense of faith so that they will have the quiet confidence, the inner power and the moral sureness which will make for creative, mature living in our kind of world. Yet, can we succeed? Let us admit that we have not always been successful in the past for we know of far too many people who were exposed to religious training but who somehow failed to catch the flame of faith. Today, however, religious education must not fail. But can we develop a program more certain of fulfilling the task?

Out of ancient Jewish wisdom comes an important observation which may help the religious educator. Commenting upon a phrase which appears frequently in the liturgy—"Our God and God of our fathers"—the rabbis of old questioned the repetition of the word "God." "If He is the God of our fathers," they asked, "why is it also necessary to call Him 'our God'?" The reason, they con-

cluded, was that the God of our fathers does not automatically become our own God. "It is only the individual in whom there is the blending of the religion of his fathers with his own faith," declared the *Baal Shem Tov* centuries later, "that can be considered the truly religious person."

There is, then, a twofold character to the role of religious education. One phase, of course, is the transmission of the spiritual legacy of the past. But religious training is incomplete if our children know only of the God of their fathers. The spirit of faith which comes out of the past must somehow become infused with living reality. That Judaism recognizes this need is seen in the demand that it makes upon every participant at the Passover seder service. Here the ritual tells us that each of us must come to identify himself with the Hebrew slaves who won their freedom from Egyptian bondage. For only thereby can the individual comprehend the full meaning of freedom and convert the God of that ancient deliverance into his own Redeemer.

But transforming the faith of one's fathers into one's own faith is a highly complex matter. It involves much more than simply transmitting religious information. Actually, what it demands is a program of spiritual training in day-to-day living. But to accomplish this kind of religious education we require three essentials. First, our children must have regular and continuous contacts with religion that will touch them at countless points along their lives. Obviously, this makes serious demands upon parents and the whole social environment. But it has become increasingly clear that the family and the home, and not simply the religious school, is integral in the religious educational process. Do you recall how Samuel Taylor Coleridge dramatized this point to a friend who insisted upon rearing his child without adequate religious training? He invited the man to come outside and see his

garden and when the friend expressed surprise at finding only a mass of weeds, Coleridge explained that one could hardly expect anything more from a garden which no one took time to tend. Yes, the cultivation of the religious life of our children, like that of a garden, takes a great deal of planning and hard day-to-day work. It cannot be carried on haphazardly or sporadically without producing a crop of weeds in the souls of men.

But, secondly, religious education can be effective only if, in recognizing differences between children, it exposes them to the full range of spiritual experience. The rabbis tell us that the real miracle of the creation of man was not that God was able to fashion Adam out of the dust. Rather, it was that each person who stemmed from original man was different and unique. Hence, it should not surprise us that the Creator also provided a multiplicity of ways by which men might come to know and revere Him. Look at our Bible, for instance. Note its wide variety of appeals to the spiritual sensibilities of human beings. For the more sensitive soul there is the poetry of the Psalms; for the ritually-inclined, the many ceremonies and rites of worship; for the legally-minded, the numerous commandments; for the ethically motivated, the Prophetic message; and for the more literal-minded, the aphorisms of Proverbs and the stories of the Pentateuch conveying the basic truths of life. Evidently, religion has always recognized that there are many ways by which different individuals find faith for themselves. Must we not, too? For who knows which religious experience may kindle the spark of God within the heart of a child?

Finally, the religious education of our times must understand that it is dealing with children, not miniature adults. Therefore, our program of religious training must be directly related to the life-needs of children. The child who is struggling to develop a faith of his own cannot

derive what he needs from the wisdom of mature theologians. To him the loftiest moral principles, no matter how sublime, are inadequate unless they apply directly to life within his own world, a world in which he seeks happier, more inwardly satisfying relationships with father and mother, his sisters and brothers, his playmates, and the ever-widening circle of his society. If he succeeds in relating religion to the intimate concerns of his life at this level, we can be satisfied that he will not forsake his faith in his later and more mature years.

Religious education for today, therefore, has the supreme duty of vitalizing the values of the faith of the fathers for the children of this generation. To this end it must provide the child with wider experience in religious living in accordance with his own individual nature and the needs of childhood. Only in this way can we hope to make the God of his fathers his God, and the basic teachings of his ancestral faith his own. But we may hope for even more—that he may go beyond his parents' generations in developing new spiritual insights that shall lead him and his fellow men more directly on the road to ultimate salvation.

Listen, then, to the voice of the religious education of today. It is speaking to us—fathers, and mothers, clergymen, teachers of religion—through the words of *The Prophet* by Kahlil Gibran—

“Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of life’s longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you.

And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts.

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls.

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The Archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends you with his might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness; For even as He loved the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that is stable." \*

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# What Can Our Children Teach Us?

BY ISRAEL GOLDSTEIN

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## What Can Our Children Teach Us?

The relationship between parents and children is the second oldest problem which has confronted the human race, second only to the problem of the relationship between husband and wife. When the Hebrew Prophet Malachi pictures the coming of the great day of the Lord, when the world will be at last what it ought to be, he summarizes that ideal state in a sentence which described the parent-child relationship. "He will turn the hearts of parents toward their children and the hearts of children toward their parents." This world would indeed be a more perfect world if better understanding prevailed between the generations. It would be not only a world of greater personal happiness, to fathers, sons, mothers and daughters, seeing that some of the most terrible disappointments and bitterest tragedies are to be found in this particular sphere of human relations. Even larger world problems, problems of the community, the city, the state, the nation, would be easier of solution, if the two generations understood each other better.

So far everybody will agree with what has been said, that better understanding between parents and children is essential. But the point I wish to make is one with which not everybody may agree. The traditional idea that it is the children who must learn and the parents teach, the children who must obey and the parents command, can stand revision. It is not a unilateral obligation, but a mutual obligation, as the Prophet properly envisioned, "The hearts of the parents are to be turned unto the children,

even as the hearts of the children are to be turned toward the parents."

What can our children teach *us*? That is the question which is not being asked frequently enough and which ought to be pondered more frequently and more seriously by fathers and mothers. Too often it is assumed that the mere act of bringing a child into the world gives the parent a divine right to omniscience and omnipotence, or that the mere fact of seniority confers a certificate of wisdom. Let us, therefore, indicate a few things that our children can teach us. We can learn from our children a fresh and honest approach to life. Doesn't it sometimes occur to you that some of the most vital things in life get overlaid by a crust of conventionalities, that the spirit of things gets crushed beneath the forms and formalities and that the fresh original beauty of life gets stifled beneath the weight of traditionalism?

Far be it from me to discount the value of traditions and conventions. They are useful safeguards against the extremes of individualistic impulses. They are the banks of the river which keep the rushing waters of life within bounds, channeling them and directing them. But to channel the flow is one thing, to obstruct it is something else. It is important that the qualities of freshness, spontaneity, vitality and originality shall not be obstructed. These are essentially the qualities of youth. We need them all through life. They help us to see things in a fresh light, to brush away the cobwebs which have gathered in our minds, to approach problems with fresh courage, to make a new start, to be born anew. In a word, they help us to reorient ourselves. The capacity for reorientation is the greatest gift in the world. "Renew our days as of yore," is a prayer that never loses its relevancy.

Self-renewal spells salvation for the individual and for humanity. As long as our hearts are turned toward our

children and our ears are attuned to their fresh reactions, it becomes easier to renew our days. We can learn much and benefit greatly by drawing closer to our children, not only physically and emotionally, but intellectually and spiritually. One can understand why in Jewish lore it is so often stated that, at critical junctures in Jewish History, when the wise old leaders of the people were at their wits' end, they would hail a child at random and ask the child to speak a word, and that word and the spirit in which it would be uttered would give them new inspiration and new courage. From our children we can learn how to face the crises of transition and change to which shifting fortune often subjects us. How wonderfully the normal child adjusts himself to transition and change. Is not the entire life of the child a series of new adjustments; learning to walk, to talk, to read, achieving new friends, new experiences, new events? The child's curiosity is insatiable. Life is a never-ending thrill. And if something untoward happens—a sad experience, a disappointment—it may mar the day, but the next day life goes on with renewed zest.

Would that we grown-ups might retain a measure of that thrill in meeting every day's experience, or a measure of that insatiable curiosity to widen our knowledge of things, events, people. Most of all, we need the capacity for adjusting ourselves to new situations, to be flexible, not brittle, so that when something untoward happens, it might bend us but not break us. I have seen men and women break under the blow of adversity and I have seen others bend, but spring back with a resilience which was a sign of unaging youth. Would that we might face whatever life may hold in store with the resiliency and undefeated zest of youth. We need the infusion of that spirit of youth in facing the difficult world which is before us. There are those who nod their heads despondently

over humanity's future. Despondency, my friends, is neither useful for the future nor justified by the history of the past. The world in our time is a world of strife and trouble. Our children's world will be brighter. Theirs may be a world of different pattern from the one with which we are familiar. Our first impulse is to mistrust the unfamiliar. Surely, however, we must admit that the pattern of things which we have handed down to our children leaves much to be desired and is full of faults and injustices. Let us not be afraid of change as long as the change is forward, not backward, and as long as the change is wrought by the free will of a free people. Let us heed the forward pulse which beats in our children's hearts.

Finally, we can learn from our children not only a more sensible attitude toward life, but also a more sensible attitude toward death. A store of superstitions has accumulated through the ages which surround death with manifold greater dread than it need hold. I am not speaking of the pain and the suffering which usually precede the farewell to life, but rather of the contemplation of death as such which fills so many with horror. The German word describes it best, *Aberglaube*, superstition, overwrought ideas and beliefs about death and the hereafter. Examine the reactions of a child who has not yet been spoiled by the "bogey" stories of stupid parents and nursemaids, and you will find a natural, sensible reaction, be it the death of a pet animal or of a beloved human—a sadness at the parting, but untinged by fears and dreads touching the future state.

Perhaps the Torah's attitude with regard to death, a wholesome attitude devoid of the highly wrought images of the hereafter which appear in later literature, may be ascribed to the fact that the Torah represents the wholesome reaction of a people in the period of its childhood.

Death would lose much of its sting if we could learn to see it even as a child sees it.

A little girl in an essay on parents once said, "We get our parents when they are at so late an age that it is hard to change their habits." I hope that there are many parents who are still young enough to be changed by their children.

Happy are they who escape the affliction of "arteriosclerosis," the hardening of the arteries, of the mind and spirit, bringing about the closed mind, and the obdurate spirit. Blessed are they who in the advanced stages of life still retain that quality which the Psalmist has identified with the good life, namely, that "in old age they shall still blossom, they shall still be fresh and youthful."

# Cultivating Humility in Children

BY SIMON GLUSTROM

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## Cultivating Humility in Children

One of the most pressing problems with which Jewish educators are confronted, is that of finding sufficient time in a limited Hebrew school schedule to stress ethics to children. Since teaching the skills of Hebrew reading and translation in the classroom requires much time and effort, our children often complete their Hebrew schooling without a clear concept of Jewish ethical values. In the final analysis, what can be deemed more important to our children than Jewish moral attitudes, enabling them to formulate a religious philosophy of life?

Let us take the concept of humility, which is common to all religions, in fact indispensable to a genuine faith in God. The problem of teaching humility to children has become most difficult in our age when environmental influences rebel against such a concept.

How can a child be impressed with humility in a society that glorifies the self-made man? Our most popular periodicals have spiritualized the Horatio Algers who have risen above their humble beginnings to build vast business empires. Ignoring the taunt of the prophet, the modern hero has even adopted as his motto: "My strength and the power of my hand have given me this wealth." The cult of success with its insatiable acquisitive drive rules out the necessity for humility, especially since the latter necessitates a sense of gratitude for the things we already possess. Advertising, which is America's largest business, permits any number of companies to tell the public that it produces the finest product available. The salesman contends that if you don't impress the customer that your

article is the best, he will not buy it. Under the influence of such permissive ostentation, what are the chances of teaching humility to our younger generation?

Another cause has helped to compound our problem: the shift of population from the rural to the urban areas of our country. When people were close to the soil, they realized how dependent they were on forces beyond their control for the good harvest. They humbly expressed their gratitude to God for the things they produced. For this reason the spirit of Thanksgiving is usually depicted by a farm scene. Today when we see merely the finished product—the packaged bread, the canned vegetables, the pre-frozen fruit—how oblivious are we of the processes that went into preparing them for consumption! How difficult it has become to feel that sense of humble gratitude for the things which we take for granted.

Even the true meaning of humility has become confounded in our day. It has been confused with self-humiliation and self-contempt. Humility has oft been identified with superficial modesty, such as when a singer protests, "My singing is abominable today!" He is essentially contending, "You should hear my singing at other times. It's great!" Or the golfer who loses patience with himself, exclaiming, "What a terrible shot!" What he means is, "You should see my normal game."

In the face of these obstacles that obscure the understanding and practice of humility how are parents to go about increasing its value to their children?

Humility is impressed upon children along with a feeling of gratitude. A thankful person is humble and a humble person is thankful. But neither attitude can be taught in a formal manner or by parental insistence. Likewise, by depriving them of things that we would ordinarily give them, we produce resentful rather than modest children.

Humble parents cultivate humble children. Parents who

admit their imperfections and mistakes to children make a significant contribution toward their character development. When children hear their parents admit, "I am sorry," they will learn to accept self-correction as normal and wholesome for themselves. Likewise, parents who listen intently to their children, indicating their willingness to learn from them, will in turn encourage their children in the art of listening and learning from others. "Who is wise? He who learns from all men," exclaimed an ancient Jewish sage.

Humility is taught by instilling a sense of reverence for men of learning. Children naturally indulge in hero worship. They often project themselves in the place of their heroes. But who are our children's ego-ideals? Are they not men either of physical prowess or great economic achievement? And what influence can such heroic figures have on our children other than the glorification of power, disrespect for the "little man," dissatisfaction with those who are not as ambitious as their paragons? What happens, however, when children come to revere men of culture—our writers, artists and teachers? They naturally feel a sense of reverence for their wisdom and genuine creativity; they become cognizant of their own limited knowledge. Time was when the teacher stood head and shoulders above any citizen in the community. We were enjoined by our rabbis to respect our teachers more than our parents, and if a situation occurred where our teacher's possessions were endangered along with our father's, we were required to save our teacher's possessions first. Such statements sound almost ludicrous to the modern ear.

Oscar Handlin, writing in the *Atlantic* magazine, has this to say about the present crisis in teaching: "But who can respect Our Miss Brooks, a female eager to be married, but unsuccessful and, therefore, condemned to remain in the classroom; or her male counterpart, the ineffectual,

bumbling Mr. Peepers? Such people incapable of the real work of the world deserve no more than amused tolerance. 'He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches,' goes the old saw: and the nickname 'The Professor' is used with comic disparagement."

If parents, then, can help to restore this original prestige to those who transmit ideas, they shall have made a major contribution toward raising children in whose lives humility plays a vital part.

Our young people should be impressed with their debt to past generations if they are to experience genuine humility. Through the struggles of our forebears, their sacrifices for freedom and liberty, we have come to enjoy their great heritage. The present generation can never fully repay the men of the past for the sacrifices they made in our behalf. We stand in awe before these spiritual giants who fought for religious freedom, political liberty and economic independence. When our generation renews the fight for these privileges we are merely continuing the struggle in which men of the past gloriously participated.

Many people seem to think that engaging in self-evaluation is a seasonal activity. Come the High Holy Days and we are bidden to reflect upon our deeds and our relationship to God and the universe. But self-evaluation should be perennial experience. We recite daily the following prayer: "What are we? What is life? What is our goodness? What our righteousness?" Children who are taught the value of continual introspection develop a perspective, seeing themselves as they really are, not as others, wishing to flatter them, tell them they are. They learn to relate themselves to the world about them realizing their interdependence with all of God's creation. They come to realize that however great their own personal talents and accomplishments, they are, nevertheless, dependent on countless others outside of their biological kin—the shoemaker,

the carpenter, the tailor. We benefit by their creativity, their happiness; we are likewise affected by their adversity.

In the final analysis, a firm faith in God, a sense of awe and reverence before Him whom we do not see, but in whose existence we trust, will instill in our children a feeling of humility. To deny God because he cannot be deduced mathematically or scientifically constitutes the highest form of conceit: He does not exist because I can't prove his existence. I become the sole judge. I ignore the testimony of countless men and women who have experienced His reality.

To teach our children how to reverently pronounce a blessing before partaking of bread or drink, or before donning new clothes, trains them to maintain a sense of wonder and awe before God who makes these gifts possible. It is not God who needs our praise; it is we who need to praise Him in order to reaffirm our humble status before Him. Abraham Heschel has phrased it in this way: "Prayer is our humble answer to the inconceivable surprise of living."

Helping the child to cultivate humility is not an easy task, but its hard-won reward is inestimable. Humility is the source out of which true character springs; love and truth, honesty and respectability are its handmaidens. Indeed, the world will stand or fall on man's willingness to see himself as he really is—accepting the human limitations placed upon him by God, yet playing an important, yes, an indispensable role as His partner.

# Honor Thy Son and Thy Daughter

BY JOSHUA LOTH LIEBMAN

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## Honor Thy Son and Thy Daughter

One of the great commandments of Judaism is “Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother” that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. In Judaism, this famous commandment became a cornerstone of group life. The rabbis dwelt upon reverence of parents as essential to the survival and the strength of Israel. How beautiful are some of the passages from the Midrash and the Talmud—“Every time a man honors his father and his mother, the Holy One, blessed be He, says ‘I shall reward them as though I had dwelt among them and they had honored me.’” It is a well-ingrained doctrine in Judaism and through Judaism to the rest of the world that reverence for parents is the indispensable ingredient in a stable and serene family life. Nor is this in any way surprising. Honoring father and mother is quite natural since they constitute our first real contacts with the world. It is the voice of our mother that is the first melody of love that a child’s ears hear. It is the strong and seemingly omnipotent father who gives the infant his first intimations of strength and competence and wisdom. Our parents are, indeed, our first models. Some parents are genuine heroes and heroines, worthy patterns to follow. Others just give the appearance of being heroic. In actuality their temperaments, their moods, their characters make them the villains in the drama of their children’s existence and the evil that they do, indeed, lives after them in the twisted and distorted outlook, the inner misery, the psychic phobias and fears of their offspring.

I would not wish to give a false impression. In many

households the relationship between parents and children is not a problem, but rather a solution. There is an intuitive warmth, a shared joy, a mutual respect which makes life something radiant and lovely and profoundly meaningful.

However, it is quite true that in our hectic modern civilization the family reveals many splits and partitions in its essential unity. Gone is the self-sufficient family pattern with its simplicity, its mutuality, and its emotional unity. We live in a time when our world is made up of great caverns and tall skyscrapers and vast assembly lines and cramped living quarters. Our age is a very complex age, and there is infinitely more frustration for fathers and mothers going out into the world of the marketplace, feeling themselves cogs in an endless machine, tired, fatigued, unsatisfied in their quest for status, never knowing the kind of security, economically or socially, which would enable them to be the integrated patterns for their children.

The parent-child relationship in our age is far more compounded of the elements of confusion and of conflict than in any previous century. Yet, unless we achieve a new clarity about the relationship between parents and children, we might as well forget the hopes of a peaceful society and a better future for humanity. I believe, therefore, that we not only need today the commandment—"honor thy father and thy mother," but another commandment—"honor thy son and thy daughter."

"To honor" is an expression carrying with it almost forgotten overtones of unconditional love, respect for personality, combined with tolerance for inevitable human shortcoming. All of us have been taught by religion and by our Western culture to feel terribly guilty if we do not accord all of these signs of devotion to our parents, but, on the other hand, parents too rarely feel an equal obligation to manifest this honor for their offspring. Amer-

icans lead the world in giving clothes, food, amusement, education to their boys and girls, but somewhat and somehow the concept of honoring their children has been pitifully left out.

"Honor thy son and thy daughter"—this, it seems to me, is the great goal of familial relationships. Parents should strive to make of their home a little democracy. Throughout the ages religion has created an enormous Bill of Rights for parents. Now has come the time when we have to write a Bill of Rights for children as well, and in the home at its best we must have a system of checks and balances, a democracy that shall avoid the extreme on the one hand, of tyranny, where the father plays the role of dictator, and the mother too often stars in the drama as the omnipotent ruler, or on the other extreme, an anarchy in which there are no laws, no rules, no accepted code of behavior, of discipline. Sons and daughters cannot develop their fullest potentialities either in a tyranny or in an anarchy.

In the little republic of the family, parents must recognize that their sons and daughters are personalities in their own rights, not mere pawns on the chessboard of parental ambition or of vanity. What a great liberation will come to the world when fathers and mothers realize that they do not own their children merely by virtue of the biological accident of birth, and see that the little infant, the growing boy, the adolescent daughter possess inalienable rights given to every human soul by God and not merely bestowed by the omniscient and all-powerful parent. The tragedy which is too little recognized in our age is that in this acquisitive society some fathers and mothers make their children their possessions; if they do not possess enough stocks and bonds or material things in the world of prestige, then they often tend to make

their offspring their compensation for failure or disappointment in the great race of life.

If a home is to be a democracy, the children have to be respected as personalities in their own rights and a climate has to be fashioned—a climate of consistency and of predictability. What do I mean by this? I mean that there should be a dependable emotional atmosphere in which the child is raised. It should be a temperate zone. A child cannot stand a parental environment which is ninety-eight degrees in the shade of love one hour, and twenty degrees below zero of rejection the next hour. Make no mistake about it, boys and girls seek discipline as well as devotion, firmness as well as love, but the firmness should be well defined and mutually understood and should seldom be an angry whim or an irrational parental caprice of the moment. Predictability and probability are now great words in science, for without them, no mastery of physical nature is possible. Well, boys and girls require predictability in the attitudes of their parents just as much as the chemist requires dependable law-abidingness in his laboratory. I do not mean to suggest that fathers and mothers should go around taking their own and their children's emotional temperature all the time. Occasional outbursts of parental anger or moodiness are both normal and are relatively unimportant, so long as the boys and girls have been given an unwavering sense of emotional security and know with all of their hearts that they are loved, wanted, and respected. A certain stability on the part of the parents is obligatory, a consistency which will make possible the beginning of a democracy in the home.

If the goal is that of honoring our sons and our daughters and creating a genuine democracy in the sanctuary of the home, then as we look at the world we can certainly find many deviations from that goal—deviations that are ultimately responsible for much of the misery and unhap-

piness of human life. World literature, for example, abounds in illustrations of lives ruined by the false and ultimately destructive attitudes on the parts of fathers and mothers toward their offspring. One has only to think of the great novelist Balzac, rejected in childhood by his greedy and self-pitying mother; of Dostoevski twisted into inner loneliness by his anti-social and essentially insecure doctor-father; of George Sand, made incapable of knowing true feminine love because her domineering grandmother, the real mother-figure in her life, always wanted her to be a boy and dressed her as a boy.

We find that fathers and mothers dishonor their sons and daughters consciously or unconsciously not only in the realm of literature. We find it in daily life. How frequently we come across fathers and mothers who make their sons the scapegoats for their own job-frustrations, the objects of aggression in the homes because the parent has to be so meek and submissive in the office or factory. How many mothers try to force their daughters to achieve careers of fame or wealth—ambitions which they themselves dreamed of attaining. These forms of dishonoring the young soul are not always obvious to the parent, to the child, or to anyone but the most penetrating outside observer. Yet, the damage is being done nevertheless. A recent very brilliant volume entitled *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* has a chapter called "Mother and Child: the Slaughter of the Innocents." The authors of this work say that we are rapidly becoming a population of neurotics because of the way that mothers unconsciously abuse and distort their children. We have painted for us in very vivid colors the portrait of the rejecting mother, the over-protective mother, the dominating mother, the over-affectionate mother who makes up for her own disappointments in life through her children.

How can the tragic errors that revealed themselves in

such cases as those of Balzac and Dostoevski and George Sand—in the realm of world literature—be avoided, and how can such terrible mistakes in the relationships between parents and children as we have noted in daily life also be averted? How can parents learn truly to honor their sons and their daughters? It seems to me that the most important truth that can be acquired by the builders of today and tomorrow in the realm of the home should be that there is a flexible strategy that is requisite on the part of fathers and mothers toward their sons and daughters, and that in each stage of the child's development a new approach is necessary. What worked beautifully in infancy certainly will not work in puberty nor in adolescence. Some parents who are wonderful with infants, cooing, loving, anticipating the baby's every wish, seem to disintegrate when the child leaves the nursery and encounters the outer world. Such fathers and mothers really yearn to prolong the stage of helpless dependence, over-protecting their offspring, producing quite frequently the coddled and the spoiled darlings who are never quite able to come to terms with mature reality. Likewise, when their son or daughter enters the strange grove of adolescence, some parents are completely bewildered. The techniques that worked in infancy or even in early childhood are no longer valuable; indeed, they prove harmful.

Parenthood is the most demanding career of all, perhaps, and the law of change applies in this career even more than in the marketplace world—change in accordance with the needs of the growing personality of the boy or girl. It is often mystifying to me to see how many fathers and mothers who are quite anxious to keep up to date in fashion, in social relationships, in their acquaintance with the newest books and the newest music—up to date also in their business techniques or their professional competence—how these men and women are so out of date

in dealing with their own flesh and blood. They have not taken account of the fact that at different stages of development the boy and girl require absolutely different approaches. The baby needs love, the child in puberty, more than anything else, needs security, and the adolescent needs the permission to grow more independent of parental advice, guidance, and domination. This, too, should not be too difficult to understand. In our relationship to our parents we adopt a flexible attitude and a changing strategy. When we are little children we think of our fathers and mothers as powerful, dominant, strong, almost omnipotent, and we look to them for everything, and then as we grow up in turn, if we are successful in our relationship with fathers and mothers, we begin to look upon them as comrades, as good companions, and then as they grow old and enter the twilight period of their existence, we deal with them not as we dealt with them when we were little children—we deal with them as dependent, lovable, revered elders who need us and depend upon us as long ago we depended upon them. We change in our attitude toward our parents with the different epochs of life. The same truth should be applied as parents in our dealing with our children. Let us be far more worried about being out of date in our handling the deep inner needs of our boys and girls than concerned about our mastery of the latest techniques in law, business or medicine, or the acquisition of the most fashionable dress or suit or hair-style of the moment. Let us always be concerned with that which is appropriate in each stage in our child's evolution. A baby that is given independence is just as tragic a figure as an adolescent who is never given independence. The infant needs to be showered with love. The adolescent needs to be given freedom from an over-clinging affection and an over-demanding protection.

I plead, then, for a flexible strategy on the part of par-

ents as a revolution in our attitude, a deep awareness on the part of fathers and mothers that they must not deal with their growing adolescent boy or girl as they dealt with him in some previous epoch of his development, that they must expand and slough off old habits and old patterns of thought and of reaction, just as they expect their offspring to expand and to grow.

Many times fathers and mothers are so unwise in the way they raise their children and even ruin their lives in the process. This truth was made very vivid to me recently while reading the wonderful new novel by Henry Morton Robinson, the brilliant literary artist—the novel called *The Great Snow*. This is a superb and remarkable symbolic story which can be read with profit by all of us. In *The Great Snow* we encounter the character of the wife, Nolla, who had been congealed and crippled emotionally by the false views of life and love absorbed from her mother, which, in turn, made her distort the character of her young son. At the same time, the hero of the novel, Cobb, is a father who by heroic strength keeps his family alive during a twenty-day blizzard. The manner in which he saved his daughter Sice from death in the snowstorm is a symbol of father-love at its best. Robinson expresses a father's true devotion in these remarkable words spoken by his hero—"I happen to love my daughter very much. It never occurred to me that death could want her as much as I do." This novel, *The Great Snow*, when read with insight, can teach us how parents often unconsciously dishonor their children and distort their whole existence. Unforgettably, too, it can teach us profound wisdom in the true honoring of our sons and daughters.

In order to fulfill this commandment of life, we must understand what our children need from us in order to be prepared to take their place in the world of men and women. In the first place, give your child unconditional

love. This is a basic law for the family pattern. Parents think that they are giving love to their children, when as a matter of fact they are showing rejection or hostility or disappointment, all wearing guises and masks. As a matter of fact, one of the great dangers in American civilization is just that fathers and mothers trained in this highly competitive society, trying to keep up with the Joneses, trying to win a higher and higher place on the rung of the ladder of success, will make their children feel that their love is conditional. "If you get a good report card, if you make the honor roll, if you show yourself to be the prettiest, the loveliest, the ablest, the wisest, the strongest in your schoolroom, then you receive all of the emoluments of affection; but if, on the other hand, you do not make yourself a display piece in the drawing room of your parent's vanity, if you disillusion your father and mother in some area of expectation, then there comes rejection, subtle or overt." I say that that is the greatest crime that can be perpetrated upon a child who did not ask to be born into the world, to be given a sense of worthlessness, of valuelessness, and of futility. Unconditional love is the first way that you can honor your son and your daughter.

The second law of honoring your son and your daughter is the law of acceptance. Accept your child not only for what he is, and incidentally, for what he can become in the realm of ability, but accept him also in the realm of nature. If you want really to honor your children, take them for granted as partly animal and partly angelic and wholly human. Do not be surprised or horrified at the outcropping of many impulses which will afterward be harnessed and channeled into mature form, disciplined as life goes on into quite acceptable pathways of creative marital fulfillment. Do not warp and twist and torment your child's whole life because he happens to have been

endowed by God mysteriously with a body, with flesh as well as with mind and spirit, and do not take the temporary and the passing sensual deed or erotic fantasy of the moment as a permanent, unchangeable character trait. Look upon your child as a tree that grows, sloughing off many old leaves and putting on much new foliage. Your child as he grows will slough off many of the old leaves of unacceptable aggression and hostility and eroticism and will, through wise love and wise acceptance, be prepared to put on the wonderful new foliage of mature fulfillment, physical and spiritual.

I would say that the third basic law for honoring of son and daughter is the law of respect. Respect your child for what he is and for what he wants to become. Give your children permission to grow up and become mature, independent men and women in their own rights. In dealing with your adolescent son or daughter, gradually achieve the wisdom of renunciation so brilliantly described by the American poet, Carl Sandburg—"Loosen your hand, let go, and say goodbye." This is perhaps the most misunderstood and the most difficult law of all. Parents oftentimes think that they are respecting the pattern of their son or daughter, but all that they are doing is trying to force their offspring into their own mould.

It takes genuine renunciation on the part of parents to allow their children the sovereign right of maturity and of independence, and yet that is the meaning of truly unselfish love. Freedom is something more than the right to the ballot. Freedom is also the choice on the part of an individual of the way that he wants to live his life, and find his fulfillment, and that choice should be given ungrudgingly by parents to their offspring, so long as the way of life is decent and the pattern of fulfillment is self-satisfying and enriching.

I am thinking now of a good friend of mine in the

Middle West who really honored his son's personality. The father in this case is a distinguished lawyer who had long dreamed that his first born would become a member of his distinguished legal firm. However, the boy was utterly bored with abstract legal concepts, but equally was he powerfully fascinated by engines and machines. His idea of a private paradise was to work in a garage and during his high school days he was to be found after school amid the oil and the steel of his mechanical heaven. That deeply understanding father renounced his own cherished ambition, encouraged his son to follow the mechanical bent that was so obvious in him, to train himself in the realm of science, and to find vocational fulfillment among his beloved tools and his greasy gadgets. The lawyer said "goodbye" to a dream of his own, but he has said "hello" to the dream of his son, and in that renunciation of his own private wishes, that father gave the greatest blessing and the finest bequest to his child, who was permitted to live his own life rather than to become the elongated shadow of his father's juristic ambition.

Unconditional love, unconditional acceptance, unconditional respect—these are three basic laws for the honoring of sons and daughters. There is a fourth important law—"give your child truth as well as respect, prepare him for the world as it is—a complex reality of good, bad and indifferent." Teach him quietly and simply in childhood and more completely in puberty and adolescence that the universe in which we live is not only filled with risks and dangers, but also is full of ruthless and selfish men and women. In our own way and at the appropriate moment, we shall tell our children what Marcus Aurelius used to say to himself each morning—"Prepare, my soul, to meet today the liar, the cheat, the thief . . ." While at first this may seem the counsel of cynicism and education for despair—it is quite the opposite. It is part of the realistic

education of our sons and our daughters. We should tell them that they should be prepared likewise to meet the wise, the good, the noble, the saintly, but we should not give them a false impression of what the universe is like and of what human nature is like, so that some day in adolescence or in maturity they batter their heads bloodily against the stone wall of reality for which they have not been adequately trained. I do not believe that we should delude our children with the fairy stories and the fantasies, and the illusions of all goodness, all beauty, all purity, so that they can never make a genuine adjustment to the inevitable compromises that life demands of them. The mother who keeps her daughter preserved in cotton and shielded with the silken spools of illusion, the father who protects his son against the mixed and mingled compounds of goodness and evil that he will encounter in reality—these parents are sowing a harvest of sadness, of disillusionment, and of later pessimism for their children and their children's children. "Know the worst about life, and work and hope for the best about life"—this is a motto that should be etched in the consciousness of fathers and mothers as they deal with their offspring.

Of course, this education for reality, this preparation for truth should not be done harshly, intemperately, unwisely. It is merely that the children should absorb from their fathers and mothers realistic and unperturbed clarity about the universe, a sense of the world's disappointments, as well as of its blessings and its fruition. Thus many later heartaches can be averted, and the son and the daughter fed on the diet of truth will be able to take their place realistically, courageously and undefeatedly among the builders of a truer, more compassionate order of life.

Finally, give your child a deep faith. Do not, because of your own mental indolence, and your psychic indifference, rob your son or your daughter of that great bless-

ing of a religious philosophy of life which will take into consideration all of the disillusionment and dark shadows of the universe and, nevertheless, find life worth living and God worth serving. Children receive the contagion of a negative or an affirmative approach to the universe from the parental environment, and I say that is why a creative and a rich and a joyous Judaism is so vital. You will honor your son and your daughter, not when you fill his soul with a vacuum, and make it a void empty of any true belief in man or in God, but when you enable him to imitate you and to fill his reservoir from your overflowing spring of faith. If yours is empty, how can your child hope to quench the parched throat—the parched throat of his soul?

These are some of the basic laws for honoring your son and your daughter. Give your children unconditional love, a love that is not dependent on report cards, clean hands, popularity, winning a place in the dramatic society, or on the high school football team. Do not allow your boy or girl ever to gain the impression that your love for him is contingent upon prizes or beauty or success. In the second place, give your children a sense of whole-hearted acceptance, acceptance of their human frailties as well as of their abilities and virtues. Show them by your acts and by your words that you *like* them as well as *love* them, that you respect their interests and creative outlet, even though these may differ widely from your own particular pattern. Above all, give your children your permission to grow up, to make their own lives for themselves independent of you, and independent also of your particular desires and ambitions. Give them a sense of truth; make them aware of themselves as citizens of a dangerous universe, a universe in which there are many obstacles as well as fulfillments, and prepare them for human nature in all of its varieties and forms and variabilities.

Show them that they must anticipate in their lifetime pitfalls and snares and fickleness on the part of human beings from whom they could expect faithfulness. Do not make the mistake of giving your children a picture of the world that is painted in unrealistic colors in which there are lights but no shadows. Give your children a sense of proportion in the landscape of the world, a sense of the reality of life with its light and its shadows, of human nature with its goodness and its evils. Lastly, bestow upon your child the blessing of a creative religious faith, a faith that is rooted in an unswerving confidence in the trustworthiness of God and the trustworthiness of life itself. Unconditional love, unconditional acceptance, unconditional respect, unconditional truth and faith—these are the laws of the honoring of your son and your daughter, and out of these laws will be built the Declaration of Independence for the coming generation—spiritual and psychic and emotional independence that, in turn, will make the world free, democratic, safe, creative.

All that I have been saying applies to each parent in one form or another. I am not talking to your neighbor. I am talking to you. I want to make this very clear because we human beings have an infinite capacity for resisting insight and truth, and feeling that it applies always to some other person, but certainly not to ourselves. We are so gifted with devices of self-deception in the areas that concern us most. We read, we hear, we think, we speak about the problems of inter-personal relatedness and we always talk as though it were an objective reality that concerned our neighbors but never touched our own flesh and blood. I say that many parents need to have the scales removed from their eyes, need to search very deeply and profoundly into the crevices of their own shortcomings, need to be suspicious of their own power-drives.

Now I do not deny that parents have rights just as

children have. Fathers and mothers do make many sacrifices for children and deserve reverence and respect in accordance with the measure of those gifts of love. Furthermore, as parents we should not demand the impossible of ourselves. If in our home there is a firm, absolutely unchanging flow of love and acceptance and respect, our children can stand occasional earthquakes and lightning flashes of anger. They should not expect perfection of us even as we should not demand perfection of them. It is not so much a matter of doing this or that, of acting in this particular way or that particular way on one day or another. It is the total picture, the whole context that is important. And that context should be the home as a sanctuary in which there shall be balance and the achievement of the golden mean between extremes—between the extremes of total dependence and total independence, of absolute freedom, of freedom that itself is painful, on the one hand, and on the other hand, of absolute authoritarianism which gives no leeway to the aspirations, the goals, the dreams of the coming generation, the dream of a well-run democracy where the rights of all, young and old, are respected and the duties of all are fulfilled. When the noble commandment of religion, "Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother," is supplemented by the new insight, "Honor Thy Son and Thy Daughter," we shall begin the journey, all of us, that will lead at last to the horizons of individual serenity, family unity, and social peace.

# *4*

COME, LET US REASON  
TOGETHER



## COME, LET US REASON TOGETHER

Roger Williams once said that "a little key may unlock a box wherein lies a bunch of keys." So it is when "Fifth Commandment Families" understand the meaning of the sanctions, disciplines, and the spirit of religion in their homes, they possess the "key that unlocks a box of keys." Theirs will then be the greater wisdom, the greater courage, and the greater idealism so urgently needed to preserve for themselves and for society the one indispensable institution for human happiness—the home.

What about those who disregard the spirit of the religion of their families and plan to marry outside their faith? They are ready to break the link which ties them to their parents and their families. They are willing to destroy the bridges to the source of life by denying their own needs to life's yearning for continuity and immortality.

Above everything else, Jewish parents give to their children the name Jew. Whether that name remains as a blessing for the child depends on the willingness of the child to carry that name with pride. It is by achieving mutual understanding between the generations that religion, which is in itself rooted in reverence for the Eternal Parent, keeps the family together and makes it a strong moral influence in society. The name Jew, to be a blessing, must cause pride to well up in the heart of the child. Pride is the daughter of knowledge. The more knowledge, the greater the pride.

Jewish pride is the product of the knowledge of the glorious history of our people in our long uninterrupted chain of contributions to humanity. Our great storehouse

of religious experiences, which have brought God closer to man and man closer to God; our literary treasures expressed both in the Yiddish and Hebrew languages; our customs and traditions have all brought a maturing discipline into our lives as Jews and a spiritual joy into our days.

It is foolhardy for young people to ignore these factors because nothing reaches so far down into the depths of the soul as religious differences. Differences in faith entail differences in practices, in psychology, in expression, in food, in holidays and Holy Days, and in outlook which involves ourselves, our families, and others with divergent attitudes and patterns of behavior. Inevitably it results in pressures and conflicts as each family tries to hold its member of the couple to the pattern it holds dear.

"Give thy servant an understanding heart" (Kings 3:9) should be the prayer taught to every young couple contemplating marriage. This can only be done within the sanctuary of our homes, where one must "Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the teaching of thy mother." (Prov. 1:8)

Rabbis are confronted every day by parents who neglected to instruct and to teach, and now expect the Rabbi "to talk" with the one contemplating marriage outside the faith. These parents expect the Rabbi to perform the miracle of undoing in a brief interview the damage that has been done over a long period of time.

Perhaps Rabbi Harry Halpern, Past President of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, has hit upon the crux of the problem when he points out that "Intermarriage is offensive only to those who have a sense of belonging to the Jewish community. For them it constitutes a sort of desertion or even treason. It means stepping across a well-defined boundary. But for those to whom the line of demarcation does not exist, who do not feel themselves part of the Jewish people, marriage with one outside the faith

does not seem to be wrong. The very parents who object so violently to intermarriage are often people whose interest in Judaism is very weak. Often the objection stems from parents' fear of public opinion more than from a consciousness of the great harm of intermarriage.

"It is hard to answer an adult who asks why he or she should remain Jewish. Although it can certainly be done. But it is easier and far more desirable to raise children in such a way that they will never think of asking such a question."

If you wish to keep your children loyal to you, loyal to the traditions of your family, and loyal to their Heavenly Father, create for them day after day an atmosphere of Jewish blessedness in your home. The best fortune to bequeath is an accumulated fortune of Jewish memories rich in brain and heart and soul and service to their family, their people, and their God.



## Mixed Marriage—A Mature Approach

BY BARNETT R. BRICKNER

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## Mixed Marriage—A Mature Approach

If there ever was a subject requiring a mature, a common sense rather than a dogmatic approach, it is this one, for marriage between people of different religions is on the increase. This is inevitable in a country such as ours where, thank God, people are not ghetto-ized and mix freely on so many levels.

The other day a couple walked into my study. They were young, attractive, intelligent. They were visibly vexed and perplexed. They were deeply in love, and they wanted to get married. Yet, everyone had counselled them not to wed. Both sets of parents were furious. They had read articles advising them against it. They felt that everyone was failing to understand that what they had in common outweighed the one great difference between them. What was the difference? He was a Jew. And she was a Christian.

They came to me because they felt that I would understand—that I was a liberal. But, to their astonishment, they found that I, too, started out by trying to dissuade them from marrying. It seems that they had a similar experience with the girl's Christian minister. In desperation, the young lady cried out, "Rabbi, why is everyone so narrow-minded?"

Are we really so narrow-minded—or are we just mature people who have had some experience with life that they haven't yet faced? Aren't we just people trying to caution them for the sake of their own happiness?

Is it not significant that even though Catholic, Protestant and Jewish ministers differ on many theological matters, on this they agree—their opposition to mixed marriages.

Believe me, we do this not because each of us regards his religion as superior to the other—or because we hate to lose adherents to our faith—or even because we know that mixed marriages often lead both parties to fall away from their religion altogether.

Our opposition comes from our desire to see people happy—and we know from experience that the chances for marital happiness are infinitely better when the couple are of one faith, and the children are brought up in a religiously united home than in one that is religiously divided. A family that prays together stays together.

Recently, I read that a couple were united by the father of the groom, a Christian clergyman, in a ceremony that combined “both the Episcopal and the Jewish rituals.” Such a ceremony solves the problem of the wedding. But marriage begins after the wedding is over, when many practical considerations arise to be reckoned with. And there is no denying that such a union adds another serious handicap to the lottery which is marriage in a world where fewer and fewer couples take each other “until death do them part.”

Before considering these added difficulties, let me explain the distinction between a mixed marriage and an intermarriage. By a “mixed marriage” we mean one in which each partner retains his own faith. Here, one plus one equals two. But in an intermarriage, one of the couple gives up his religion and assumes the religion of the other, feeling that this sacrifice is necessary. A conversion takes place, and they become of one faith. Here, one plus one equals one, which is as it should be in an ideal marriage.

What about the popular belief that “opposites attract,” because they will complement, or supplement, each other? I believe that the only opposites that should attract and be married are those opposite in sex, but alike in as many other respects as possible—in racial and family background,

in education, in ideals, in likes and dislikes, in financial and social status.

The greater the similarities between a couple, the more mutual ties that bind them, the greater will be the chances of marital success and happiness—whereas, the wider the area of dissimilarity, the greater must be the possibility of conflict and disagreement.

An article by Dr. David Mace (*Woman's Home Companion*, July, 1951) pointed to the findings of a number of recent studies which reveal that tensions in an inter-faith marriage don't come to the fore during the early years when the glamour of love and sex is still high and all-pervasive, but that they show up, and tend to increase, as the marriage goes on.

We grow more religious as we grow older, and we have a tendency to revert to the deep things that have been inculcated in us. "The fullest union between a husband and a wife is attainable only if, with all the other things they have in common, they have a religious and spiritual background in common."

Perhaps the most telling argument against mixed marriage is the statistical evidence by Dr. Judson Landis of the University of California that the incidence of divorce and separation is two and one half times greater in marriage between Jews and Christians than in marriages between partners of the same faith—and this divorce rate increases in marriages between Catholics and Protestants.

Whether we like it or not, we must recognize the existence of religious, racial, and social tensions. A person who abandons his own faith to marry someone of another religion is apt to be treated with coolness, and even with aloofness, by family and friends. We are not self-sufficient. Being socially isolated is bound to create emotional problems which threaten the marriage.

And then, of course, there is the big question: Is mixed

marriage fair to the children? Is it conducive to their mental and spiritual health?

I know of cases where, to escape all arguments, neither the parents nor the children ever go to church, synagogue, or religious school. I know other instances where one parent goes to church and the other to the synagogue, and the children go where they choose. In the first case, everyone concerned is deprived of the comfort and strength religion brings in time of crisis. The argument that the children can choose a faith when they are old enough is fallacious. Such children later resent the failure of their parents to provide them with a spiritual background.

In the second case, the tragedy consists of dividing the home on an issue about which there should be unanimity. Only in a home where there is peace of soul can there be peace of mind.

I had an experience that I shall never forget. A girl of 14, whose father was a Jew and whose mother a Catholic, one day in my study cried out, "I hate my father and my mother. I hate my home. I am a mongrel. Why did I have to be born? The Jews call me a Gentile. And the Gentiles won't accept me because I am a Jew."

I am sure that if young people about to jump the religious fences could foresee the possibility of such a tragedy, they would stop, look, and listen before plunging ahead.

What about a couple who decide, under the circumstances, to make their marriage childless? If they are older people, then what they do with their lives is their own business. But I can't see how two young people—and I emphasize the word "young"—can hope to make their marriage a happy one by beginning life together that way. Children are the joy and purpose for which marriage exists. That's why so many childless couples adopt children. Far better for one to convert to the other's faith and plan for a family and a happy home.

It is my experience that mixed marriages, in most cases, simply don't work out. There are exceptions, but they are what Tennyson once called, "the wilderness of the single example." Is this your experience also?

# What Price Intermarriage?

BY SAMUEL ROSENBLATT

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## What Price Intermarriage?

The problem of intermarriage for Jews who are concerned about Jewry's future is as old as the Jewish people themselves. It presented itself when the first child born of a Jewish father and mother was confronted with the task of choosing a mate; and it is just as burning a question today as it was when our forefather Abraham, nearly four thousand years ago, dispatched his trusted servant Eliezer to Aram Naharaim to select from among his kin-folk there a wife for his son and heir Isaac, who had become of age.

Matchmaking was never a simple feat. So remarkable did it strike our sages that two human beings, who started out as total strangers, should cling to each other all their lives, that they attributed this miracle to none other than the Almighty Himself, and said: "It is the Holy One Blessed Be He who provides man with his mate."

Finding a life-partner is not as simple a matter as fitting a garment. Had it been so, our law courts would not have been kept so busy putting asunder that "Which the Lord hath joined together." The reason why divorce is so common in modern human society is that husbands and wives are not to be gotten "made-to-order" like suits or dresses, but have to be accepted "ready-made." Herein lies the crux of the difficulty in matchmaking in general. And when a Jew marries, there is the added precaution that must figure in his choice of a partner, of safeguarding the way of life the propagation of which is his mission on earth. If Judaism is worth keeping, then it is worth perpetuating, and it won't be perpetuated where one half of a household

is for it and the other half is against it. "A house divided against itself," as Abraham Lincoln was wont to remind his audiences in his efforts to maintain the integrity of the United States of America, "cannot stand."

This is, in fact, the philosophy underlying Judaism's pronounced opposition to the intermarriage of Jews with members of other creeds. This was the reason why the Torah warned the Israelites against marital alliance with the Canaanites, as it is said: "Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor shalt thou take his daughter unto thy son." (Deut. 7:3). It was on this account that father Abraham took the trouble of sending all the way to Mesopotamia for a daughter-in-law, and that Isaac and Rebecca preferred to see their son Jacob leave home rather than have him marry one of the native daughters of Canaan, such as Esau had taken unto himself, whose ways and manners were a "bitterness of the spirit" (Gen. 26:35) to his parents. The danger of alienation, as a result of such unions with strangers, was ever present, as it is plainly stated: "For he will turn thy son aside from following Me, that they may serve other gods." (Deut. 7:4). Even a mighty and pious king like Solomon, the man who had built the Temple of Jerusalem to the honor and glory of the God of Israel, could not escape the negative influence of his foreign wives, so that in his old age he became an idolator.

Now the very fact that injunctions against intermarriage are found in the Bible and that rabbinic law does not recognize the validity of a union between a Jew and an unconverted non-Jew, itself implies that such unions were by no means infrequent, or the legislation against them would have been unnecessary. One doesn't pass laws to cope with situations that are non-existent. And the truth of the matter is that not only in modern times but in antiquity as well, instances of intermarriage between Jews

and non-Jews were quite common; so much so that when Ezra, who has been called the second Moses, came from Babylonia to Jerusalem during the early days of the Second Temple, he felt compelled, in order to keep Judaism from disintegrating in the second Jewish commonwealth, to issue an edict enjoining the Jewish inhabitants of Palestine to divorce their non-Jewish wives.

The arguments that might be marshalled to bolster the case for intermarriage can be impressive and weighty, and they may make it very difficult to comprehend Judaism's strong opposition to it. Certainly if Jews are anxious to win the good-will of their gentile neighbors, who are today everywhere, outside the state of Israel, in the majority—and there are ever so many concessions to non-Jews that the Talmud recommends "for the sake of maintaining amicable relations"—they cannot hope to get it by snubbing them in refusing to marry their sons and daughters. It was precisely by means of this criterion that Napoleon Bonaparte sought to test the sincerity of the patriotism of the Jews of France of his time when he convoked the so-called "Sanhedrin." "If you Jews consider yourselves Frenchmen and, by virtue thereof, entitled to the rights of citizenship in the French Republic on a plane of equality with the rest of the inhabitants of France, would you accept them as your equals by intermarrying them and would you recognize the validity of such marriages?" Of course, the sole purpose of the wily Emperor in subjecting the only recently enfranchised Jews of France to this test was to deprive them again of the boon of liberty that the French Revolution had conferred upon them. Whatever his intentions may have been, however, the religious leaders of French Jewry found themselves in a very serious predicament and the only way out for them at the time was to state that, while marriage between Jews and non-Jews would have to be regarded as legal, they could not re-

ceive the sanction of the Jewish religion so long as the non-Jewish partner had not been converted to the Jewish faith. Once that detail was adjusted, no further objection could be raised. In any case, the cause of good-will, so it would seem, could hardly be furthered by an out-and-out Jewish rejection of intermarriage with non-Jews.

What now? Where does one proceed from here? What justification is there left for Judaism's persistence in its opposition to intermarriage? We are speaking now of Jews who take their Judaism seriously, who are not ready to abdicate, to capitulate from their ancestral creed. That its maintenance becomes difficult, if not virtually impossible, where, broad-minded and tolerant of each other's beliefs though a husband and wife may be, they adhere to two different religions, does not require demonstration. It is particularly when children are born, who have to be reared in the one or the other tradition, that conflict is bound to arise. At best the youngsters will be confused and bewildered by the contradictions between their parents. The alternative is often a split personality, leading to mental imbalance, delinquency and other such evils. Laissez-faire is, therefore, no solution. If Judaism is to be preserved, the non-Jew must be persuaded to embrace the Jewish way of life. Such an arrangement, even though it is unfair to the non-Jewish partner, is preferable to having a house divided, one that is half Jewish and half non-Jewish, neither of which can be denied. It worked very well in the case of Ruth, the Moabitess. Why not in others?

The trouble is that not all converts, who accept a faith other than that into which they were born and in which they were raised, in order to please a strong-willed spouse, are as dependable as Ruth was, and can't be trusted to persevere in their newly acquired religion. After all, Judaism is not an easy faith to keep. Being a Jew is fraught, in many parts of the world, with serious disadvantages and grave

handicaps. With an individual not born a Jew, who would normally not have to put up with the burdens that persons of the Jewish faith are compelled by society to bear, it is but natural that, when these burdens become too heavy, he should rebel against being tied down by them.

It is on this account that Jewish law frowns upon accepting as proselytes non-Jews, whose motive for conversion is marriage. Judaism does not believe that such converts will remain within the Jewish fold very long. Converts of this kind were looked upon as an "indigestible, unassimilable element"—"a sore on the skin of the Jewish body politic." They were considered a source of weakness rather than strength to Judaism.

But let us consider even the ideal case, where the convert to Judaism becomes completely attached to the Jewish religion. Even in such an ideal case, the solution is far from being a happy one. No matter how things are arranged, someone will be hurt. After all, when a person marries, he does not become involved with one single individual only. He marries into a family, with its history, its background and its traditions. Families usually mean a great deal to all human beings who have standards, attachments and feelings. No self-respecting individual can simply uproot himself and banish his father, mother, sisters and brothers forever. Yet, when a person changes his faith, especially when the transition involves the radical step of converting from Judaism to Christianity, or vice versa, he immediately sets up a barrier between himself and his own flesh and blood.

According to Jewish law, conversion severs, theoretically speaking, all former legal family ties between the convert and his kindred. Non-Jewish parents must sense this as keenly, when one of their own children embraces the Jewish faith, as do Jewish parents when their offspring turns from Judaism to accept Christianity.

All of these problems, conflicts, antagonisms, bruises and hurts, can be avoided when, instead of allowing our impulses to lead us, we follow the dictates of common sense, which advise us to marry one of our own. The most common cause of marital unhappiness is, after all, incompatibility. When Ecclesiastes said: "And I find woman to be more bitter than death," (7:26) he had in mind an unequal match. For, of him who has found a suitable mate, our sages say that "he is kissed by Elijah and beloved by God." (Derek Eretz 1). To be sure, it is impossible to know in advance whether the person one marries will be compatible or not. Sometimes all the precautions taken turn out to have been in vain. Nevertheless, experience has shown that safest, in this respect, is he who marries within his own class and station an individual accustomed to a mode of life similar to his own. This applies particularly to such matters as religion. When husband and wife have the same religious background, there are fewer gaps to bridge or adjustments to make than otherwise, and the potential of friction is to that extent reduced.

But what about love? How can one be so cold-blooded about a matter that involves a human being's life-long happiness, which is a question of sentiment rather than a commercial transaction? How can a man and a woman feel for each other as deeply as husband and wife should, if, before they decide to become bound by the most intimate of human ties, they inspect and measure each other as a farmer examines an ox at a cattle exchange?

First of all, it may well be questioned whether that which often parades under the guise of love—I mean the romantic attraction for each other of young persons of the opposite sex that is denominated by the French as "l'amour"—is really love, or whether in most cases it is not rather mere infatuation. For if it were genuine love and not its counterfeit—pure erotic emotion, unfulfilled desire—it

would not wear off as soon as the urge was satisfied. Real love should wax stronger the longer the lovers live together, like the fibres of two trees that have become intertwined with each other and grown together. Secondly, since when is it a virtue, in so important a matter, so intimate a relationship as marriage, to stumble into it blindly? Where is it proven that unless a person *falls* in love, he can't be happy, or that love must precede rather than follow marriage? The reason, in fact, according to Madame Scuderi, why many matches go on the rocks is because those who contract them, instead of having their eyes wide open before they enter into matrimony and half-shut after they are married, go into marriage with their eyes closed and first open them wide when it is already too late. "Love," it has been said, "overlooks all faults." (Prov. 10:12). This overlooking should be done when a man and a woman are already bound up for better or for worse. That is the time when they ought to learn to love each other for the good qualities they possess, for all that they have in common, aside from the opportunity for sharing life and fulfilling their destiny. Before they enter into their partnership, let them be as critical as they can be, so that they may avoid possible pitfalls. And the number one question they should ask each other is: "Do we see eye to eye in the matter of our religious faith? Are we sufficiently close to each other in our outlook in this regard as to be able to establish a well-integrated household?" Marriage is not for a day, or a week or month or even a year. It is intended to last a lifetime, to strike the deepest roots and produce the widest ramifications. To be sure, happiness is not a treasure that can be seized by force or snatched at will. Under the most ideal conditions luck will continue to play its part. It will always remain a choice between having attained the heart's desire, and bitter disappointment. But one can't expect to

achieve happiness by plunging headlong into almost certain disaster.

Intermarriage with adherents of other faiths, especially of Jews and non-Jews, by the very nature of the circumstance, rarely ever leads to complete domestic bliss, because it lacks that all-important, indispensable requisite for such a relationship; namely, harmony. True, no two human beings think or behave exactly alike. Each person is a distinct and separate entity, different from the other. Yet, beneath all the normal differences between husband and wife, there must be sufficient similarity and agreement between them if they are to be held together. Among these, those of religious background take probably the first place.

He who judges by these standards is led inevitably to the conclusion that intermarriage is not worth the price. It is not necessary for Jews to intermarry with their Gentile neighbors in order to win the latter's esteem and respect. On the other hand, those that do, are usually almost certain to forfeit their Jewish birthright, while it is extremely doubtful whether they will attain the married happiness for the sake of which they have sacrificed this great privilege of having been born as Jews.



## **Another Look at Mixed Marriage**

**BY ROLAND B. GITTELSOHN**

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## Another Look at Mixed Marriage

I want to deal with three questions and to do so from the most intensely practical point of view within my power. One: why is Judaism officially and almost universally opposed to the practice of mixed marriage? Two: why do some Jewish young people seem to be so greatly tempted toward mixed marriage? And three: what should be the attitude of intelligent Jewish parents when the problem strikes them personally? Now that you have my entire prospectus before you, let us proceed at once. Perhaps I should first say parenthetically that the greater part of our time will go to the first of these questions; our answers to the second and third will in part be implicit in our conclusions on the first.

Why, then, the overwhelming Jewish opposition to the marriage of our sons and daughters outside the faith? It goes without saying that Orthodox and Conservative rabbis are unanimously opposed to such marriages. What may not be quite so well-known but should be emphasized at the start is that Reform rabbis are scarcely less opposed. In 1909 and again in 1947 the Central Conference of American Rabbis, our official association of Reform Jewish religious leaders, adopted a statement which read in part: "The CCAR declares that mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American rabbinate." Out of more than seven hundred Central Conference members, at the present time I doubt whether there are more than twenty at most who, despite the clearly-expressed opposition of their colleagues, will consent to officiate at such marriages with-

out prior conversion of the non-Jew to Judaism. So I have not exaggerated in asserting that the opposition is, for all practical purposes, universal. Why?

There are two reasons. The first I mention only in passing. No one who is concerned about Jewish survival can look with equanimity on the practice of mixed marriage, because we know that ultimately it would lead to the complete disappearance of Judaism and the Jewish people from the stage of history. Whatever statistical studies we have suggest that in this country not less than nine out of each ten children born from mixed marriages sooner or later become Christians. No people as much in the minority as ours and intent upon perpetuating its culture and itself can countenance a risk of such proportion. If I devote but a brief paragraph to this aspect of our subject now, this is not because I think it unimportant but rather because I know that unfortunately the survival or disappearance of Judaism isn't apt to figure very prominently in the deliberations of two young people who believe themselves to be in love. Let me hasten on, therefore, to the second reason which, unless they be foolishly irresponsible, should have a most prominent place in their thinking. I refer here to the problem of such a couple finding happiness in their marriage.

### *How Much Chance for Happiness?*

If there is one thing on which psychologists, sociologists and others in the relatively new profession of marriage counselling are agreed, it is that the more two people share in common of life's fundamental values, the greater is their chance for happiness together. The more they differ in important cultural and psychological respects, the less likely are they to be happy as husband and wife. Thus Clarence Leuba, Professor of Psychology at Antioch College and for many years a teacher of marriage courses in

that institution, writes: "In every marriage there are bound to be some outstanding differences in interests, attitudes, and beliefs; but a marriage cannot stand too many of them . . . Cultural, religious, or racial differences are of this sort; they are likely to have far-reaching effects on marital adjustments . . . Where the marriage partners come from different religious, economic, political, or social backgrounds there are endless possible sources of irritation."

A glance at the record will swiftly indicate that this view is more than mere theory. Marriage statistics in Hungary, for example, in the 1920's, showed the divorce rate to be three to four times higher in cases of mixed marriage than when husband and wife came from the same faith. Here in this country, of much more recent date, the so-called Maryland Study discloses alarmingly similar results. A sober scientific study was made of twelve thousand young people and their family backgrounds. It was discovered that where both parents were Protestant, 6.8% of those studied came from broken homes. Where both parents were Catholic, 6.4% reported broken homes. In cases of mixed marriage, the broken homes amount to 15.2%. Which means, to put it bluntly: the rate of divorce or separation was two-and-a-quarter times greater in mixed marriages than the average for others.

Let me add that for the sake of fairness and objectivity, I have chosen here one of the more conservative of available studies; others from the states of Washington and Michigan show even greater disparity than this. And a prognostic study made some years ago by two of the very best men in the field, Burgess and Cottrell, concludes that, where all other factors are equal, the chance for marital happiness is eleven times greater where the couple agree on all matters of religion than where they differ.

It should also be remembered that these statistics refer only to marriages that were dissolved by separation or

divorce. We know that these are by no means the only unsuccessful matches in each group; there is no way to judge how many others, while apparently remaining intact, represent "lives of quiet desperation."

I must confess here to a feeling of deep frustration. How many weary times have I cited these studies to young couples who have come to see me, knowing full well in advance that their reaction would be: so the statistics show a great risk of failure in cases of mixed marriage . . . this we cannot and do not deny . . . but we love each other sufficiently to overcome the obstacles . . . we'll be one of the exceptional couples who succeed. And what is infinitely more frustrating and depressing: how many of those very couples who refused to listen, who insisted—so understandably but oh, so tragically!—that they would be different, how many of them ended their marital careers in divorce courts or shackled to each other in loveless prisons they ironically called their homes. Sometimes if I could be granted just one professional wish, it would be for some method by which to impress upon each such new couple the experience of those who have made the same mistake before them.

### *Is Religion Important?*

This brings us almost inevitably to the case of those who say: we can understand and appreciate that religious difference may be a major stumbling-block if the religious heritage of bride or groom or both means anything substantial in their lives. But frankly, our religious difference is purely academic because religion as such means little or nothing to either of us. What can we say to such couples? First, don't assume that religion will always mean as little to you as you think it does now. Don't box yourselves in to prevent the spiritual growth and maturation you have a right to expect and experience, especially when your

children are born and you drink more deeply of life's richest wells. Many a person who had no room in his life for religion at the age of 20 or 25 has been amazed to find himself profoundly religious ten years later as a parent.

As long as I live I shall be unable to forget a man who cried profusely and bitterly across my desk a few years ago. Religion had meant so precious little to him when he married that he had glibly promised to rear his children in the Lutheran faith of their mother. He had come to see me just six months before his son's thirteenth birthday. Suddenly it had occurred to him that this boy would be the first male in his family literally for centuries not to observe a Bar Mitzvah ceremony. And this man, to whom religion—so he firmly believed at the time of his marriage—meant nothing, wept before me like a baby!

My second answer to the couple who are convinced that their mixed marriage will work because neither of them is religious is to feel great pity for them. I know of nothing that can add more of substance or depth to the life of two people who are truly in love than religious commitment fully shared. How my heart bleeds for a groom and bride who permanently shut the door to such happiness for themselves, who, in effect, declare an armed truce on religion from the start, thereby closing off an area of sublime joy which they may never taste together.

Dr. James A. Pike, recently elected Episcopal Bishop of California, writes: "A person's religion is his frame of meaning, the source of his priority scale of values, the measure of his hopes, the wellspring of his most secure joy. When two people decide for a lifetime to pool their strengths and weaknesses, their hopes and fears, the religious dimension in the personality of each of necessity plays its part—consciously or unconsciously—in their most significant relationships, decisions and responses to each other. Lacks, conflicts or closed doors in the matter of religion cannot

be brushed aside as a mere matter of the private taste of each party. . . In the long run the best single thing a marriage can possess is a common religious grounding. . . ”

By the way, do you remember the figures I gave a while back, indicating that the divorce rate among mixed marriages was 15.2%, two-and-a-quarter times that among homogeneous marriages? Well, the rate of separation where the parents had *no* religion to share was even higher—16.7%! Anyone believing that the importance of shared religion to the success of marriage is mere theory will be guilty of unforgivable self-deception.

### *A Gamble*

One more thing needs to be said before we can in good conscience leave this first part of our discussion. It would be dishonest and untrue to leave the impression that mixed marriages never succeed. The probability is that nearly every person can think of at least one that did succeed, or at any rate which appeared to be successful. Such marriages can succeed but the odds are against them. Bishop Pike puts the matter very well when he asks what the reaction of his reader would be if, upon purchasing a ticket to fly the Atlantic Ocean, he asked whether it was a safe trip and the agent replied: “Oh yes, every once in a while a plane gets through.” “Marriage is at best in part a gamble. The risks, calculated and otherwise, are formidable. The stakes are inordinately high. When special circumstances make the odds too overpowering, it is well to think twice before declaring oneself.

Incidentally, the fact that I have referred only in connection with one brief personal experience to the children of mixed marriages should not be construed as minimizing in any way this aspect of the problem. Indeed, more often than not the children are not only a chief cause for the later unhappiness of their parents, but are themselves the

principal emotional casualties of such matches. If space permitted, I could cite evidence and experiences almost without end to prove this. Instead, let me just tell you about the girl who came to me two years ago to undertake a course of study that would lead to conversion. When I questioned her as to her reasons for taking this step she said: "Rabbi, I was myself the child of a mixed marriage between a Protestant and a Catholic. I would do anything within my power to save any future child of mine from the excruciating emotional tensions I had to face as a consequence. For the sake of my child or children, before I marry a Jew I must myself become a Jew." So much, then, on the first of our three questions. Obviously and necessarily we must now consider the second and third with much greater brevity.

### *Greener Grass*

Why do some of our Jewish young people tend so strongly toward mixed marriages? The simplest and most obvious answer is: they just happen to fall in love with individuals who just happen not to be Jewish. Psychiatrists tell us, however, that seldom, if ever, does any experience which is deeply emotional "just happen" to us. There are usually profound underlying reasons for such apparent coincidences. I do not rule entirely out of possibility the occasions when two young people of differing faiths fall in love with each other, innocent of any deeper psychological complications. But neither do I accept the premise that this is what happens in most cases.

Very often the desire of a Jew to marry a non-Jew is his unconscious way of rebelling either against his parents as such, one or both of them, or against his Jewishness. I might add that sometimes the choice of a marriage partner even where there is no question of crossing religious lines represents a rebellion against parental authority. This is

even more apt to be so where mixed marriage is involved and especially where the dating pattern over a period of years has disclosed a consistent preference for gentile partners. Such preference may be, without the individual being consciously aware of it at all, a rejection of parental discipline that has been too severe or of what the parent has represented to his child.

Or it may be, even more directly though still beneath the level of consciousness, a rejection of Judaism as such. What could be more natural than for a Jewish young person who has never really felt comfortable or at home as a Jew, who has always felt unhappy and inferior as a Jew, to escape the unpleasant and acquire that which has always seemed to him preferable and superior by marrying a Christian? Of course, he isn't himself aware of his motives; that's what makes it so baffling, at times so utterly frustrating an experience to deal with him. And that also is why the establishment of warm, loving, permissive, tensionless relationships between parent and child from the beginning, and the equipment of the child through proper pedagogic understanding with a positive attitude toward his own Jewishness, may well be the most effective, even if the least direct, methods of reducing the ultimate probability of mixed marriage.

### *A Word to Parents*

This brings us finally to the question of what parents can or should do when all else has failed and mixed marriage seems unavoidable. There are two things which, in my judgment, they should definitely not do. They should not discuss the matter on a basis of "look what you're doing to me" or "how can you think of ruining my life?" It isn't the parents' welfare which should be primary at this point, it's the child's. All the convincing facts there are should be brought into the open in the most effective

but least argumentative manner possible to establish the grave danger mixed marriage presents to the welfare and happiness of two people considering marriage and eventually of their children, not of their parents.

The second thing parents in this situation should not do is to threaten cutting all ties with their children if the marriage occurs or in effect to sit *shivah* for them after it has taken place. However deep their disapproval, however painful their fears for the future, the love they bear their children—and each other—must be unconditional. The acceptance which members of a loving family extend to one another must not be predicated on following each other's advice, even when it is good.

May I add here that even as sons and daughters often have their unconscious motives in desiring mixed marriage, so parents sometimes act out their unconscious needs and give expression to their inner guilt in opposing it. How often have I noticed that precisely the parent to whom Judaism seems to have meant least through the years, the parent who couldn't be bothered with living an active Jewish life himself or providing the proper kind of Jewish education and home for his child, reacts most hysterically at the prospect of mixed marriage.

Parents are within their rights in asking a young couple so involved to wait even longer than they normally would before being wedded. If the risks are greater, the precautions also should be wiser and the existence of genuine love be more positive. Parents also have a right to ask that the prospective son- or daughter-in-law give serious consideration to conversion, not only for the couple's sake but even more for the security and emotional health of their children. But when all is said and done, when parents have advised and recommended and urged, they must in the last analysis be prepared to accept. Once this or any other marriage has actually taken place, be it foolish

or wise, desirable or deplorable, be the prognosis favorable or precarious, it becomes the inescapable obligation of the couple, of their parents, of everyone concerned to do their utmost toward making that marriage succeed.

My cherished friend, Alexander Magoun, has written many wise sentences about marriage. One of the wisest reads: "The only thing in the world as strong as love is truth, and there are reasons to believe that as far as marriage is concerned they are different aspects of the same thing." It is because I believe that real love is impossible without truth and that couples who are contemplating mixed marriage run the risk of denying truth or at least of momentarily obscuring it, that I would warn them most earnestly to proceed with utmost caution or not at all.

Marriage is the most sacred relationship in human experience. It can bring men the most ecstatic happiness . . . or the deepest despair on earth. Before entering upon it, let the wise man or woman respect with reverence the wisdom of the ages.



# **5**

**THE SPRINGS OF LIFE  
REFILLED**



## THE SPRINGS OF LIFE REFILLED

If you were the wisest person in the world and could have but one wish granted you, what would you ask for? Would you pray for peace—for wealth—for long life—for happiness—for great learning?

This question was asked of the wisest man of all, King Solomon. He chose none of the many desirable things mentioned above. He asked for an “understanding heart,” above all else, so that he might be able to tell the difference between good and evil.

Why did he ask for this one thing? Because to have an “understanding heart” is to know that whatever was our yesterday or today—as every day—we start anew. It is to know that yesterday’s evil is not stronger than the force of good with which we start every new day. It is also to know that free will is granted to every man. If man desires to incline towards the good way and be righteous, he has the power to do so; and if he desires to incline toward the unrighteous way and be a wicked man, he has also the power to do that. Since the power of doing good or evil is in our hands, and since all of the wicked deeds which we have committed have been done with our full consciousness, it befits us to turn in penitence and to forsake our evil deeds; the power of doing so being still in our hands. Thus, an “understanding heart” gives us this power to choose

To possess an “understanding heart” does not depend upon the age of a person. What is age? Some people say a person is only as old as he or she thinks. Submitted to critical analysis this doesn’t always make sense. For ex-

ample, consider Miss Jones. At the early age of five, Miss Jones suddenly became six and entered school. On trolley cars her age remained six until she was nine.

When she was eleven years old, she was twelve, and for the benefit of the movies and railroads, she was twelve until she was fifteen. At fifteen, her age jumped to sixteen; at sixteen to eighteen; at eighteen to twenty. On her twenty-seventh birthday, Miss Jones became twenty-four years of age, and was married.

At thirty-five, she was thirty; at forty she was thirty-nine, and she remained thirty-nine until she was close to fifty. At fifty, Miss Jones was forty; at sixty she was fifty-five. At sixty-five, she was sixty-eight and on her seventieth birthday everyone said Grandma Jones was pretty chipper for an octogenarian. At seventy-five, she had her picture in the paper as the oldest woman in the country aged ninety-three. Then, ten years later, she died at the ripe old age of one hundred and nine!

What is the point of all this? It's simply to ask, "Who's fooling whom?" Our lives run away "like a shadow"—regardless of the actual days lived. And unless we stop for a long moment and reappraise ourselves, we can easily wind up forgetting our age and the true purpose of living.

Only those who don't understand the significance of the cycles of time and the round of seasons will bemoan the continuous changes of nature and will resent man's forced march to old age. Nothing is static in nature or in man. We must move on, but we also carry with us much of that which has gone before. Our maturity is inevitably rooted in our youth. The rhythms of nature find their reflections in the heart of the man who possesses an "understanding heart."

There is a time for youth and a time for old age; a time for growth and a time for harvest; a time for summer and a time for winter.

"Many long for immortality," said George Bernard Shaw, "who don't know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon."

The Jew has always been keenly aware of the dimension called Time. He concludes his daily morning prayers with a special psalm assigned for each day of the week. The passing and coming of the months are accompanied by the special prayers of the "Blessing of the New Month." Creation in the first chapters of the Torah is described as being regulated by time: "It was evening and it was morning—the second day . . . and it was evening and it was morning, the third day, etc." The psalmist makes us very conscious of time: "For a thousand years in thy sight are like a day that passes; and as a watch in the night." He then continues in the same chapter: "The days of our years are but three score and ten, or by reason of strength four score." This is immediately followed by the sublime prayer: "Teach us, therefore, to number our days, that we may get us a heart of wisdom."

Herein lies the crux of the matter. Those who attain the "understanding heart" are aware that life is so fleeting and they pray: "How can we make each day count? O God, help us live while we are alive."

A purpose and usefulness which give you the great feeling that your being here matters—that's what makes you *live* while you are alive.

It is not so important to ask "what do I want out of life" as it is to know "what life wants out of me!" The Prophet Micah's question clarified this point. He asked: "What doth the Lord require of thee?" He didn't ask: "What do I require of the Lord?"

Rabbi Mendel of Kotzk urged that "Man was created so he might lift up the heavens." The young man who thought himself very wise confronted the Rabbi with the complaint: "A fine world your God made. Why I could

make a better world myself." "Go to it!" said the Rabbi. "That is why you are here!"

We are here to make this a better world in which to live. Young people have a lot to teach their elders; even more than their elders realize. They still have a sense of excitement in their doing because they are filled with the joy of being alive and with the romance of growing and striving.

But youth is an attitude of mind as well as a time of life. People grow older, but at times they grow down and not up. Growing up means "ascending the mountain of the Lord." It means keeping alive the spirit of adventure and the thrill of righteous and joyous Jewish living.

Perhaps it sounds fantastic to speak of "man's vision meeting God's dream." But does not Scripture tell us that "The Lord *came down* upon Mount Sinai when Moses *went up* to receive the Divine revelation"?

Mount Sinai, then, is also part of man's personal world. When he moves ahead, eager and alert to improve his lot and the lot of his family and his fellow man, his world grows, for then he realizes that "life is too short to be little." He ascends the ladder of his highest self to meet God, and God comes down into his little world to meet him.

## **Adding Life to Our Years**

**BY JACOB MILGROM**

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## Adding Life to Our Years

Reading the Torah introduces us at once to the problem of old age. For we read—"and Abraham was old, advanced in years." But surely this recording of normal aging would not attract unusual notice, were it not for the comment of the rabbis—"until Abraham's time there was no old age. Then Abraham came, prayed to God and was granted old age."

What a strange and bewildering statement. What can our sages possibly mean that "until Abraham there was no old age?" Surely, even according to the Torah, Abraham was not the first old man. In fact, all of his predecessors lived longer than he. Kenan, Jared, Methusaleh were among those whose life spans were the greatest ever recorded in human history. How then could the rabbis contradict the evidence of Scripture and say that Abraham was the first old man?

And the Torah which has raised the question also answers it. In the case of Abraham's predecessors, it is true that they lived to a ripe old age. But what did they do in their lifetime? What did they accomplish during their sojourn on earth? About the forefathers of Abraham—about Kenan, Jared, and Methusaleh, it is simply written—"and they begat many sons and daughters." Yes, for all the fabulous number of years that those men lived, all they did, all that they accomplished was to beget children.

But, when we turn to Father Abraham, we see clearly that his life was full of accomplishment, particularly so in the period of his old age. For Abraham, life began at seventy-five. At this advanced age, tradition tells us, he

uprooted himself from home, his friends, his business and community and undertook the perilous journey across the desert to start a new life in Canaan—to found a family and faith, a new idea of God, and a new people to transmit it. It is, therefore, true that the forerunners of Abraham attained old age, and even lived longer than he. But, they did nothing with their longevity. Abraham, on the other hand, attained his greatest achievement and renown at the end of his life, while he was an old man.

No wonder, then, the Torah emphasizes that Father Abraham was really the first to attain old age. For it was Abraham who first exhibited potential contributions that the aged can make to society.

How urgently is this lesson from the Torah needed by mankind, particularly our own generation. For it is during these last few decades that medical science has taken such breathlessly rapid strides in prolonging the life span of man and increasing the number of old people in society. A few statistics compiled within the Commonwealth of Virginia will suffice to point up this remarkable fact. In 1920 there were 98,000 people above the age of sixty-five. In 1950, there were 214,000 and in 1960 it is estimated there will be 300,000 such aged in Virginia alone. Why, at this rate, in the country as a whole, by 1980 there will be at least 24,000,000 over the age of sixty-five.

Man's physical survival to a ripe old age is now possible. But the problem remains—what of his mental, emotional, his spiritual survival? Yes, man may be able to live a long time in retirement: What will he do? How will he feel useful? How can he feel that he belongs? How can we prevent feelings of loneliness, futility and despair?

Let me rephrase the problem in terms of the Torah. It is very feasible, according to respected medical opinion, that in the near future a life span of 100 or 150 years will be possible. The reported longevity of a Kenan, Jared or

Methusaleh may actually be realized. But the question which the Torah asks is still in place. Will it be said of us, too, that all we have accomplished is "that we have begat sons and daughters"? Having attained fullness of years, with what will these years be filled? Having added years to life, will we be able to add life to our years?

It therefore behooves us to examine, in the life of Jewish teaching, the value and status of the aged in our midst. In ancient days, the old were regarded as useless and unproductive, and therefore they were destroyed and killed off, lest they become a drain to society. In our own day, thank God, the teachings of all religions have taught us not to take the lives of our aged. But somehow, our attitudes toward them have changed very little.

Merely to examine the vocabulary of old age, as found in our daily speech, would suffice to indicate that we regard the aged as superfluous. We speak of old age as the "unproductive years"; as the "days of retirement," meaning, for the most part, a total withdrawal from the urge and surge of community life.

To thrust home the depth to which our prejudice toward old age has penetrated our thinking, let us turn once again to our Torah text. It reads *Ve' Avraham zakain, ba bayamin*, which the King James, the impeccable and magnificent King James, translates "and Abraham was old, stricken in years." And even the Jewish Publication Society Bible, the official Jewish translation, reads "stricken in years."

Indeed, when the scholarly experts mistranslate *ba bayamin* which means "advanced in years" as "stricken in years," no additional evidence need be sought to demonstrate the deep-rooted prejudice of western society that to be old is to be stricken—to contract disease and misfortune.

Obviously such ingrained bias cannot be confined to the innocuous realm of language and speech. Its venom

seeps into our actions and habits as well. Need we be reminded that in twentieth-century America a man over forty finds it difficult to obtain employment? Great corporations and businesses will not even be ashamed to admit that they practice discrimination toward the aged. As they tell us, the future of America rests in its youth: "get up and go" is the measuring rod of business; physical vigor, stamina is what makes the wheels of industry go round.

Many of us will recall the phrase "life begins at 40." It is an empty cliché, a deceiving delusion. In the practical world of business and society, life, or at least a new life, is over at forty. Yes, when we think of the aged, or grandparenthood, at best, it means ideal baby sitters; at worst, it is synonymous with idleness, loneliness, and despair.

We are relieved, as with a refreshing breeze, as the teachings of Judaism parade before our eyes—"Thou shalt rise before the aged and honor the face of the old," says the clear voice of our Bible. And our rabbis explain that respect for the aged means not to sit in their seat, not to speak before they speak, nor to contradict them after they speak. Nor does it make any difference whether the elder is learned or not, whether he is Jew or Gentile. His age in itself deserves and commands our respect. "Who is sure of heaven?" asked the Talmud, "He who honors the aged."

And it is not that Jewish tradition is worshipfully idealistic about the aged. It recognizes, all too realistically, that age can be accompanied by senility, that it can be marked by acts of irresponsibility and foolishness. As the Rabbis put it: "The idea is to be both old and wise, for there are some who have years and lack wisdom, and there are some who have wisdom and lack years."

But the respect that Jewish tradition mandates for the aged stems from a healthy appreciation of the accumula-

tive experience and matured wisdom that can only come with advanced age. In fact, the word *Zaken* is both the word for old man and wise man. And when we speak of the *zikne ha-ir*, the elders of the city, we mean counsellors, the judiciary, those who are selected to sit in judgment over others. The Bible itself makes this explicit when it tells us that the destruction of Solomon's kingdom took place primarily because the counsel of the aged was spurned in favor of the advice given by younger men.

In our day, the indispensable position which the aged should hold in society was clearly and forcibly emphasized in a speech made by Dr. Louis Finkelstein, the president of the Jewish Theological Seminary at the last convention of the Rabbinical Assembly of America. Speaking to the rabbis in personal, fatherly tones, Dr. Finkelstein decried the untimely loss of some of his colleagues, who had died in the prime of life. He counselled the rabbis to take longer vacations and in particular, to set aside some time each day for the study of Torah, removed from the anxieties and pressures of congregational administration. He made this particularly pertinent remark: "One man aged sixty is more valuable to me than ten men age aged twenty." And in what stark contrast does this statement stand in the face of employment policies in vogue in our land today. For here we have the recognition that only with age can there come that wisdom that can never be acquired by brains or books—a wisdom that comes only through living, through experience, through the confrontation and with the resolution of those anxieties and problems of life which years alone can provide.

Indeed, it was the first Jew, Father Abraham, who, along with his major contributions in the field of religion and ethics, also taught us and demonstrated by his example that old age is the time for maximum fulfillment. And in giving these new facilities to our aged, in reordering our

perspective on the value and status of our old people, we too may experience the fulfillment granted to Father Abraham—"and Abraham was old, advanced in years; and the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things."



# Our Best Years

BY JOSEPH ZEITLIN

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## Our Best Years

Some time ago, a motion picture appeared on Broadway entitled, *The Best Years Of Our Lives*. The title has always intrigued me, and so I am tempted to ask the question which must be in the minds and hearts of many people. What are the best years of our lives? Basically, this question challenged the minds of many men and women centuries and centuries before Hollywood attempted to wrestle with it. There is a striking verse in the psalm: "So teach us to number our days, Oh Lord, that we may get us a heart of wisdom." From the very beginning of time, man has engaged in an eternal quest for life abundant. What are the best years of our lives? Surely religion in general has something to say on so fundamental a question; particularly is this true of the Jewish religion.

If one were to ask the average person, "What is the most enjoyable period in your life?" he might answer, "Childhood." Just consider how beautiful and wonderful the life of the average child is. It is an age of innocence. As the Talmud says, "The world was created because of the innocence of children." When you are a child, you do not know of worry, disappointment, frustration or sorrow; everything is truly glorious. In a sense, children live in a world of make-believe and their innocence lends such enchantment to life. It was the famous cynic, George Bernard Shaw, who said, "Youth is a wonderful thing, but the trouble is it is wasted on children." Yes, on the surface, childhood constitutes the loveliest years of our lives. No worries, no cares, no disappointments and no heartaches. And yet, have you ever studied the emotions of a child?

What happens to a five-year-old when little David cannot have a second helping of ice cream, and when little Harriet is refused a new pair of skates, and little Judith may not stay up until half past nine to see a favorite television show, or when little Jimmie cannot have an Indian suit? If we were to study the emotions of the disappointed child, weigh the tears and sobs and hysteria at the time that he cannot have his way, we would say that, after all, the years of childhood are not really so roseate. So as we grow a little older, we begin to thank the good Lord that we have stopped being childish. Our sense of values and our perspective have changed. The things we thought were so terribly important in life when we were children we now find are unimportant, and frequently, those values that we considered inconsequential we discover as the years go on are of the utmost importance. No, childhood does not represent the best years of our lives.

Some people think, of course, that youth constitutes the best years of our lives. Just think of the world of promise that belongs to a young man and a young woman. The most challenging period in a person's life is generally his youth—the strength, the energy, the power, the vitality that youth possesses. The French have a proverb which goes something like this: "If youth but would and age but could." Yes, wars are fought and worlds are changed and worlds are destroyed and born again. Upon whose shoulders rest the burden? Upon the young. The heroism of young people, particularly when they are in their late teens and early twenties, is indescribable. Statistics show that during World War II, the most dangerous missions were rarely assigned to soldiers in their late twenties or in their thirties. It was the very young who were sent out on hazardous assignments. At the moment, I am thinking of our boys in the American Service as well as the soldiers of France

and England and various nations throughout the world and the tiny nation of Israel.

The story was told to me of the way in which a young man in Haganah fought for God and country. When they were in battle against the overwhelming military power of the Arabs, the story was told to me of a young soldier who took his hand grenade, placed it in his bosom, and threw himself under the enemy tank. As he threw himself beneath the tank, he and the enemy were blown to bits. That is so characteristic of the strength, the devotion and the idealism of the young. It is no exaggeration to say that with the gift of youth, one can truly conquer the world. All this is true on the positive side of the ledger, but as we reflect upon some of the other implications of being young, we soon realize the years of our youth are not always happy. There is the problem of economic insecurity. A countless number of young men and women are in love. They would like to marry, establish a home, raise a family, acquire some stability, but they fear that because of their youth and the pressures of economic insecurity, they are prevented from attaining these blessings or acquiring these blessings. Just consider the vast number of young people who have returned from World War II who are still without homes of their own, who live with relatives, who are under tension. We cannot enjoy peace of mind without security. Theirs is a difficult life. No, we cannot say that youth can be singled out as the best years of our lives.

Well, some people argue, "If you are looking for an answer to the question of what our best years are, you will find it in middle age." Once you have reached the forties, you begin to get a sense of balance, a feeling of stability. The follies of youth are now a matter of the past. One acquires a deeper understanding of life. In middle age, we are surrounded by family and loved ones. Our whole

outlook on life is changed. If a person has lived a reasonably clean, decent and frugal existence, and he has a little reserve from which he can draw, then a good number of comforts and pleasures that one could not afford in earlier life now belongs to him. He begins to enjoy a general feeling of contentment. Middle age is the time when man starts to reap the fruits of his labors. Are they not then the best years of our lives? Again, there is the counter argument. The period of middle age is fraught with danger. As a clergyman, it is amazing to see how we are frequently called upon to minister to families where the deceased was a comparatively young person in his middle forties or early fifties. But for some reason or other, particularly in this era, middle-aged people stand at the brink of misfortune. A person in his late forties or early fifties does not seem to realize that the human machine does not function as well as it did years before. There are innumerable cases of coronary thrombosis, heart attacks, hypertension, and what not, mainly affecting people in that age level, not old people and not very young people, but the middle-aged person. That period, from the scientific point of view, is one of the most dangerous in a person's life. The middle-aged person has to be on his guard against trying to do the things that he was able to do a decade or two before: so these years also are not necessarily the best years of our lives.

Well, you will ask, what about old age? That seems to be a wonderful period in man's life. The old are wise and mellow, understanding and sympathetic. In normal life, the aged are surrounded by children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The scene is a very touching one, for then man begins to realize the fulfillment of his dreams and prayers and hopes. Inspiring, indeed, have been the experiences of the aged. As a result of many years on earth, they have acquired a deep understanding of life.

Man is possessed of a more profound sense of values. He has learned to put first things first, and secondary and tertiary matters in their proper place. The aged are surrounded by friends and dear ones who respect their opinions and who are inspired by their sagacity. And, yet, the picture is not always so pleasant. If there are compensations in old age, there are surely many shortcomings that attend it. Physically, the individual realizes that he is destined for the grave. While death is inevitable, and the young know that they will eventually die, it is the aged who *must* die—who face every day the certainty of it in the aches, the pains, the loss of memory, the deterioration of the human body, all of which makes so great a burden of old age. It is the exception rather than the rule that people grow old gracefully. Sometimes the very opposite of what we expect in old age actually takes place. Many simply cannot adjust themselves to the painful slowed-down tempo of their lives. They feel unhappy that they cannot do the things that they did in their younger days, and so to many, old age is a curse rather than a blessing.

Thus, we have hurriedly reviewed the various cycles of life, and no single period can be regarded as truly being abundant in happiness. What are the best years of our lives? Infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, middle age, old age, not one of them is perfect. What then is our answer to this challenging question? Our religion offers an explanation. It says to us, that neither the past, nor our childhood, nor our youth, nor our middle age, nor our old age is the blessed period of our lives. Our greatest happiness exists right before us in the present. There is a striking comment in the Talmud to the effect that when the children of Israel were crossing the Red Sea, they began to sing a song of triumph unto God and they uttered the words, "The Lord will reign forever and ever." Whereupon one of the rabbis remarked that if instead of

saying that the Lord *will* reign forever and ever, Israel had said, "The Lord does reign forever and ever," then misfortune and sorrow would not have befallen them. There is a very thought-provoking idea in this comment. If life is to be abundant and blessed for us, we must learn to live in the present. It does not mean that we must live for the present, but rather that we must live in the present. The best years of our lives are to be found in making the most of the present, of appreciating the "now" in our lives.

How the world has to learn that lesson! In the process of history, there were always contending forces that prevented mankind from enjoying happiness and peace. You will observe that whatever progress was made in human affairs came as a result of the men and women of spirit who grasped the moment rather than glory in the past or hope for the future. In this way some of the great social evils of the past, feudalism, slavery and the like were removed from the world.

Finally, dear friends, in our personal experience, we must learn to live in the present. How often do we postpone our obligations? "When I will have a little more time," says one man, or "When I will be better off financially I will join my synagogue; I will spend more time with my family." These are resolutions that may never be fulfilled, even as the sages tell us in *The Ethics of the Fathers*, "Do not say that when I am free I will study. Perhaps you will never be free." The moral is patent. Study now. Improve and enrich your life now. Be a good father, husband, brother, friend, spiritual being now and not in time to come. This is the answer to the ever-challenging question—what are the best years of our lives? Not the past, not the future, but the present! God grant that this be the motivating influence in our lives. For this is the way to life abundant and blessed.



# Middle Age and Old Age: How Can We Meet Them?

BY LOUIS I. NEWMAN

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## Middle Age and Old Age: How Can We Meet Them?

Benjamin Disraeli in *Coningsby* remarks: "Youth is a blunder; manhood a struggle; old age a regret." In a similarly pessimistic mood, we forget the injunction of Koheleth: "Rejoice O young man in thy youth." And as we contemplate the tribulations of young people endeavoring to settle down to their work, their marriage and their mission in life, we are sometimes tempted to conclude that youth is almost an illness and must be treated as such. But middle age and old age are frequently regarded as even more dolorous, as Robert Nathan has indicated in his words:

"Bring grief's good goblet out, the sad, sweet cup,  
Fill it with wine of silence, strong and dry.  
For I've a story to amuse your ears,  
Of youth and hope, of middle age and tears."

Most of us try to prolong our youth as long as possible, like the sage who said: "I have a lot of work laid out for the next few years. Old age is always just fifteen years older than I am." But suddenly we awaken to the knowledge that we are in the middle years; before we can catch our breath, the rising generations regard us venerable patriarchs and matriarchs. How then shall we meet the onrush of time when we have passed the meridian of our life?

Many centuries ago, Seneca, the philosopher, anticipating perhaps the modern devotees of skiing, remarked: "Life is most delightful when it is on the downward slope." To be sure, in middle age, the bodily machinery begins to

creak, foretelling the frailty ahead which Koheleth has eloquently described in his twelfth chapter. But it behooves us to find the compensations inherent in our middle and later years. We must overcome the enemies of contentment, chief among them the sense of boredom and ennui which overtakes so many of us. For decades we have thought the same thoughts, followed the same routine, encountered the same set of problems, and noted the same reactions by our fellow-pilgrims to their personal problems. It is the ceaseless repetition that repels us as if we were blinded camels turning the grinding-stone. Life loses its originality and freshness. When young people bring us ideas which seem to them startlingly new, we are inclined to remind them that far from being pioneers, they are merely imitators. We profess to be surprised at nothing and prepared for everything. We tend to grow dull and ponderous, because we imagine we have heard and endured everything before.

It is for this reason that a housewife in her middle years will move the furniture into new patterns; a man will seek fresh romantic adventures, forgetful of the rabbinic injunction that he must always cherish the wife of his youth. Once I heard a successful business man, after reading a well-known psychiatric work, try to make a case for self-revitalization in his fifties by new sentimental attachments. But a noted public leader replied to him that a man in his middle years must translate his energies into zestful and worthy forms of interest; he should find life's durable satisfactions by altruistic and self-forgetting service in enterprises of communal and civic helpfulness. The very vexations and annoyances in posts of leadership to which men and women may be summoned in their middle years can convince them of the unbroken zestfulness and merit of recurring human experience.

We can meet middle age and old age by realizing that

most of us are never really dispensable or expendable, even though young people may seek to shunt us to the sidelines. Only a few among us obtain the release from anxiety and the enjoyment of complete serenity which we profess to seek in our waning years. The state, as well as private industrial and labor organizations, may have the duty to provide at least a modicum of security from economic worry; children also must honor their obligation to care for their elders in days of reduced earning power and increasing illness. Young people today should prove false the well-known adage: "One parent can take care of five children, but five children cannot take care of one parent." Those young adults who avoid protecting their elders who have labored and perhaps sacrificed for them in days of health, are setting a miserable example of indifference and neglect which their own offspring will imitate in their turn. But is it not true that most of us hope to be able to pull our own weight in the boat of life until the very end? And is this not more often the necessity than otherwise?

The *Hasidic Zaddik*, the *Radomsker*, tells that a passenger on a ship impatiently awaited the day when it would reach port. When the ship was nearing the harbor, a storm drove it back to sea, much to the chagrin of the traveler. "Likewise a man is afflicted with anxiety for his children until he succeeds in rearing them to maturity. Then he hopes to be freed from worry regarding their lot. But his son comes with his troubles seeking paternal counsel, and the father's retirement is delayed. The daughter also comes with her problems, and once more his hope of a quiet life is postponed. Few of us are ever entirely freed from worry and the necessity for continuous labor in this world."

I am confident that many parents can say "Amen" to the message of this parable. The ship of life rarely comes home safely into port, and the tempests of circumstance rage about us to the very last moment. Therefore, let us

learn early in life to accept its vicissitudes with equanimity, good humor and forbearance. And, in a sense, let us rejoice that the challenges of duty still attend us, lest we deteriorate in so-called retirement. "I was ever a fighter," says Browning in *Prospice*, "so one fight more."

We can find compensations, too, in the knowledge that in our later years, if we are fortunate, we can complete the work we have previously outlined for ourselves; we can act upon the plan that "pleased" our "boyish thought," as did Wordsworth's "Happy Warrior." We can hear the concerts, see the plays, read the stories, take vacations, labor on the hobby or avocation we have always envisaged; we can develop new tastes and interests in art, handcrafts, and culture. Blessed is the person who discovers unexpected talents in himself as painter, sculptor, wood-worker, writer or welfare-worker.

If we cannot do any of these pleasing things, let us at least conserve our soul in patience and good-will. We can find ways and means to prevent ourselves from becoming querulous and crotchety toward others, particularly the members of our family. We can learn also to relax, if necessary, away from the habits of chieftainship to which we have become habituated. We can channelize our energies away from responsibilities which the new generations are eager to assume; we can sublimate our still vital strength in tasks appropriate to us.

Indeed, the greatest victory we can win is to learn how to act our age. The psychiatrists and educators wisely describe for us the behavior we can expect from our children and young people in their various stages of personality evolution. By the same token, let us endeavor to understand what we may rightly expect in and of ourselves in the later years. "No wise man," said Swift, "ever wished to be younger." Do not lament, "bring back the years that have gone," but say rather, "life owes me nothing."

A beautiful woman must reconcile herself to the diminishment of her allure and delight in her title of mother and grandmother. A vigorous executive must delegate more and more responsibility to his co-workers. "Old age," said Walpole "is no such uncomfortable thing if one gives oneself up to it with a good grace, and doesn't drag it about 'to midnight dances and the show.' Youth is sometimes a liability in positions of high trust, but many obstacles disappear in the middle and later years just because one is seasoned and mature. Let us make the most of the opportunities for enlarging service which become our heritage as the years melt away, when we cannot rely upon older advisors, but must in turn give counsel to others."

We can face life's shadows if we learn to accept ourselves in terms of clear reality. Who can say, amid our disappointments and frustrations, that we have truly realized our youthful hopes. Heinrich Heine once remarked: "There goes a man with a wonderful future—behind him." The shocks and tests of life's competitions sometimes compel us to appreciate at last that we are not the persons we expected to be. Husband and wife may not altogether fulfill their highest anticipations, each of the other, but if they are wise and understanding, they have built over the years the habits of loyal and loving comradeship by which they can encourage and assist each other in tenderness and consideration as they await the dwindling of the future. Two lines from Browning should console us: "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a Heaven for?" and "What I aspired to be, and was not, comforts me."

In the last analysis, the best remedy for the disabilities of middle and old age is a philosophy of life or religion. I once had a California friend who said: "When a man gets old, he goes to church or sits in the park." George Meredith has written: "Not till the fire is dying in the grate, look we for any kinship with the stars." In our

journey toward the sunset, we realize life's myriad complexities and the impenetrable mysteries of the universe. The older we grow, the less we see we know. The cock-sureness of youth and the arrogance of the middle years vanish, and we come to feel the need for guidance from a Power vaster than ourselves. We seek to discover meaning in our tiny contribution to the values of society; we try to comprehend the infinite and eternal setting of our individual experience. We yearn to know whether the causes we have cherished will endure beyond our brief sojourn on earth. We may not petition for a glimpse into the future, but we pray for the confidence that wrong will not ascend the throne or right perish on the scaffold. Let us strive to triumph over our heartaches, losses, and self-delusions, so that we can sincerely attest that God is compassionate; that the world is worthy, and the travail of humanity meaningful, whatever our personal portion. If we are wise, we know that "the fruits of old age" are "the memory of blessings previously acquired." and we find pleasure in "old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old aspirations, and old dreams." The Rabbis correctly remind us that we must shout our cheers not merely for the outgoing ship commencing its voyage, but for the incoming ship which has entered the harbor safely. "When a man has lived and dies in peace, all should rejoice, seeing that he has completed his journey and is departing this world with the imperishable crown of a good name." Then at the very end we can muster the fortitude and faith which Woodrow Wilson showed, when he faced the close of his work, grieving that he had failed in his hope to unite mankind in a fellowship of peace. We can take to our own hearts the consolation which he found in R. D. Blackmore's great poem:

"In the hour of death, after this life's whim,  
When the heart beats low, and the eyes grow dim,  
And pain has exhausted every limb—  
The lover of the Lord shall trust in Him.

"When the will has forgotten the lifelong aim,  
And the mind can only disgrace its fame,  
And man is uncertain of his own name—  
The power of the Lord shall fill this frame.

"When the last sigh is heaved, and the last tear shed,  
And the coffin is waiting beside the bed,  
And the widow and the child forsake the dead—  
The angel of the Lord shall lift his head.

"For even the purest delight may pall,  
And power must fail, and pride must fall,  
And the love of the dearest friends grow small,  
But the glory of the Lord is all in all."

# When Parents Grow Old

BY JESSE J. FINKLE

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## When Parents Grow Old

"Then Joseph could not refrain himself . . . and he made himself known to his brethren and said 'I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? . . . be not grieved or angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life . . . hasten and go up to my father and say unto him, "thus saith thy son Joseph . . . come down unto me and tarry not; and thou shalt dwell in the land of Goshen, and thou shalt be near unto me . . . and I will sustain thee for there are yet five more years of famine!"'" (Gen. 45:1-11).

In these heartwarming remarks of Joseph to his brothers, and in their subsequent fulfillment, we find reflected the Jewish ideal of the relationship which should be established between parents and their grown-up children. This problem is becoming increasingly important in our day and age when medical advances are lengthening our life-span, bringing more of us to the "golden years" of old age. But whether or not our old age will be "golden" and full of satisfaction and contentment, depends, in large measure, upon the relationship between parents and children.

To begin with, when parents grow old, they yearn to see their children succeed in finding their place in life and achieve some degree of success in their own particular chosen field of endeavor. Thus, Joseph asked his brothers to inform their father that he had the good fortune to become the leading man in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh himself!

We can be sure that when the aged Jacob heard this

news, his thoughts turned back to the early years of Joseph's boyhood and the father's concern for the future of his pampered and too-well protected son. At that time, it appeared that perhaps Joseph might not have the strength of character to meet life's difficulties and achieve a worthwhile career. But now when Jacob hears that Joseph has achieved such notable success, the heart of the aged father is justly filled with pride and satisfaction.

While it is true that when parents grow old they continue to love their children, even when they are failures, and encourage them to keep on trying; yet, parents deeply yearn to be able to rejoice in their children's worthwhile achievements which are indicative of their maturity and ability to stand securely on their own.

Then again, when parents grow old they not only yearn to see their children succeed in life, but perhaps even more, they yearn to enjoy their continued comradeship. Thus it was that Joseph not only wanted his father to be proud of his success, but was also most anxious to have him come down to Egypt and live near him.

Now, it is only natural, and in most cases inevitable, for children to grow up and break away from their families to marry and raise families of their own. But this change should not constitute a complete break, but rather lead to a new and finer type of relationship and comradeship between children and parents.

This new relationship is not always achieved because it is difficult for some parents to become adjusted to the fact that when their children marry, the first loyalty of a husband is to his wife, and the first loyalty of a wife is to her husband. How sad it is to see some mothers refusing to share their son's affections with another woman, and some fathers not wanting to share their daughter's love with another man. It is equally sad to find some sons who never succeed in freeing themselves from close attach-

ment to their mothers, and some daughters never changing their love for their fathers.

Fortunately, however, most parents *do* realize that with marriage, their children acquire new responsibilities and must be allowed to live their own lives as they see fit. Wise and understanding parents do not attempt to impose their own opinions and attitudes upon their married son or daughter, but at the same time, they let it be known that parents are always ready to offer advice whenever consulted. In the mature spirit of comradeship between parents and children, the younger generation comes to appreciate the importance of experience and wisdom that comes only with the years, while the older generation comes to recognize the realities of progress and the value of newer and often better methods of reaching desirable goals.

Lastly, when parents grow old, they hope to find in their children a feeling of responsibility toward them. "Thus saith thy son Joseph . . . come down unto me and tarry not . . . I will sustain thee for there are yet five more years of famine!" These words of his son Joseph must have touched Jacob deeply. He was once a rich man, but in those critical days of famine, he needed help. No doubt, like all parents, Jacob would rather have not have needed support from his son, but how tragic it would have been if his son had turned him down!

Whether parents need it or not, it is a source of deep satisfaction and joy for them to feel that their children are able and willing to bear the burden of family support which may include partial or complete support of parents. What a powerful temptation it is for children who have achieved a notable measure of success, prosperity, and social advancement to leave behind poor and aged parents in the feeling that they have outgrown them and that new circumstances call for new and different associations.

How easy some children find it to excuse and even justify such an immoral course of action!

Through such examples as Joseph's dealings with his aged father, Judaism bids every loyal son and daughter in Israel, "Hide not thyself from thine own flesh." (Isaiah 58:7).

As we go through life, we pass through three stages of development in our relationship with our parents. In our childhood days, we are completely self-centered and absorbed in our own joys so that we never think of our parents as needing anything that we might be able to provide, but only in terms of their always giving things to us. Then in our youth, we enter upon the path of maturity leading toward independence of personality based upon an understanding of our mutual privileges and responsibilities within the family and in society. After we have grown up, we find ourselves being the stronger and our parents the older and weaker. Then it is that Judaism expects every Jew to be like Joseph of old, and strive to bring joy and happiness to our parents; to make them proud of our achievements and success in life, not only in terms of money, but also in terms of reputation and character; to strengthen the bonds of comradeship with them and be willing, if it becomes necessary, to take from their shoulders the burdens of family responsibility.

May the Almighty bless us who are parents with devoted children like Joseph, and help us to be worthy of our children's love and affection, thus fulfilling the teachings in the Book of Proverbs: "The glory of children and their parents . . . let thy father and mother have reason to be glad in thee!" (17:6; 23:25).



# Preparing for Old Age

BY SIDNEY GREENBERG

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## Preparing for Old Age

Some time ago I was visiting at the home of a friend shortly after the death of her aged father. During the course of our conversation she made a wistful remark which bore heavy overtones of regret. "You know," she said, "we ought to give a lot more thought than we do to the problem of preparing for old age."

The bereaved daughter's remorseful remark constitutes a challenge to consider a problem which happily is facing an ever-increasing number of people in our country. One hundred years ago, the life expectancy in our country was age thirty. Today it has risen to age sixty-six. Already some 13 per cent of the American population, or more than 20 million people, have passed their sixtieth birthday. By 1980 it is estimated that some 20 per cent of the population will be above that age.

A reflection of this trend is to be found in the emergence of a new science called *geriatrics*, which is concerned exclusively with the aging process and its attendant problems. Geriatrics, as I see it, is the answer of science to mankind's perennial prayer. We all want to live long but none of us wants to be old. Geriatrics, I think, tries to satisfy both seemingly contradictory desires simultaneously.

Now, we must admit at the outset that we cannot speak of "old age" without a number of qualifications. For one thing, when does old age begin? Well, that depends upon whose age we're talking about—our own or our neighbor's. Most of us tend to grow old about fifteen years later than the people we know. When one U.S. Senator became a grandfather for the first time, he was asked how he liked

his new status. "I love it," he answered like a doting grandfather. "But," he added wryly, "it is somewhat distressing to have to live with a grandmother."

Yes, "old age" is relative. When Earl Warren was appointed Chief Justice in 1953, one of the reasons given for the choice was "his relative youth"—sixty-two. On that very day, the governor of Puerto Rico pardoned a prisoner on account of "his advanced age"—sixty-three. In baseball, a player is old at thirty-five. For congregational committees in search of a rabbi, old age begins at forty—with the candidates. And Dr. John Erdman, prominent surgeon, was more in demand at eighty-five than ever before in his life.

Moreover, we do not grow old evenly, the different parts of our body do not age at the same pace. A physician will tell us that a sixty-year-old man may have a fifty-year-old kidney, a forty-year-old heart, seventy-year-old liver and he may be trying to live a thirty-year-old life.

There is also, as we know, a difference between chronological age and emotional age. Some there are who are the perpetual adolescents, petrified youths, who fell in love with an earlier period of life and subconsciously vowed never to part from it. "O moment stay, thou art fair!" they exclaimed with Faust and at that point their growth became arrested.

Notwithstanding these reservations, for our purposes we can define old age as I once heard Walter Reuther define it—as that time in life when we are too old to work and too young to die. How should we prepare for old age?

### *Visible Means of Support*

Well, the first thing that comes to people's minds when we speak of preparing for our twilight years is economic security. We think in terms of pensions, social security, retirement funds, annuities, insurance policies. These are

the means we try to adopt to forestall the day when we might find ourselves lacking both physical resources and financial resources. And there is no minimizing the importance of such planning and the peace of mind it affords. It is wise, indeed, that we do our best to answer the prayer which we repeat regularly in the grace after meals: "Please, O Lord, make us not dependent upon the gifts of human beings." *Nit onzukummen zu mentchen* is the way our grandparents prayed in their daily speech.

And yet, in old age as in our youth, economic security is never a guarantor of contentment. "Money," it has been correctly observed, "is an article which may be used as a universal passport to everywhere except heaven and as a universal provider of everything except happiness." All of us know some aged people who certainly have much more than the modest food and comfort their diminished appetites require, and yet, they are disgruntled, complaining, miserable.

What else then ought we to bring to old age besides economic security?

### *The Untroubled Conscience*

One of the most important things each of us should try to bring to old age is an unsoiled and untroubled conscience. At that stage in life when our physical power ebbs and we live more and more with our thoughts, let us make certain that we will not be tormented with the memory of evils perpetuated and hurts inflicted.

This, as we will recall, is the central theme of Sholom Asch's novel, *A Passage in the Night*. Isaac Grossman, a one-time immigrant, has made a fortune and controls an empire of hotels and theatres. We find him vacationing in Florida when the book opens. He has everything, it seems, that a man would need in old age. He has more money than he can use, he has prestige, he has the smug

self-satisfaction which success often breeds, he has children and grandchildren. But he has no peace of mind. For weighing like a mountain on his heart is the searing memory of the Polish worker, Yan Kovalsky, from whom young Isaac Grossman took \$27.00 years ago. That was the \$27.00 Kovalsky had intended to use for the purchase of a second-hand suit for his daughter's wedding. That was the \$27.00 Isaac had needed to begin him on a traveling salesman career which was eventually to lead him to millions. It is this memory which haunts old Mr. Grossman now and fills him with an obsessive, almost pathological, compunction to try to find the man he had wronged many years ago and to make amends to him. Yan Kovalsky is not to be found, and Isaac Grossman goes from one frustrating quest to the other until his own children begin to suspect his sanity and have him committed to a mental hospital.

Here we may have an extreme example, for Isaac's offense was only a single lapse and Judaism does believe in atonement. But what of those who pile ruthlessness upon dishonesty, to whom no relationship is sacred, no loyalty binding, no morals restraining, who are unmoved by sympathy, who rarely yield to a charitable impulse—how serene an old age do they have a right to expect?

Our sages were exceedingly wise. When they wanted to indicate how the young years could be used with greatest profit, they said: "Well spent is our youth if it does not bring shame to our old age." For they understood well that the transgressions of youth are loans upon old age payable with interest about thirty years after date. Max Ehrmann's prayer touches upon a most vital need for our advancing years: "May my thoughts and actions be such as shall keep me friendly with myself."

God grant us in old age the blessing of an untroubled conscience.

*The Unclosed Mind*

In the third place, we ought to try to bring to old age an unclosed mind. Someone has said that "some minds are like concrete; all mixed up and permanently set." The latter part is a danger to which we become more vulnerable as we grow older. It is tempting to develop a permanent mind set.

To shut the windows of the mind is to court mental and spiritual suffocation. Leonardo de Vinci, who lived to a ripe old age and continued to paint masterpieces in old age, declared, "Learning keeps the soul young and decreases the bitterness of old age." We must literally never stop going to school, broadening our horizons and expanding our knowledge. This, after all, is the distinctive Jewish contribution to mental hygiene. The unparalleled emphasis of Judaism upon study as a process which only death ought to terminate, spelled out more than a religious duty. It was the key to the fulfillment of the blessing the Torah confers upon its devotees. Thus did the Jew find in it "length of days and years of life"—meaningful days, throbbing years.

The Talmud tells a story about Judah bar Ilai, a second-century sage, who deeply impressed a pagan in the market place by his radiant face. "This man," said the pagan, "must either be intoxicated or he has just discovered a hidden treasure." Rabbi Judah overheard him and said: "Stranger, I do not drink except when I must for ritual purposes. When I drink the four prescribed cups of wine on the Seder night, I have a seven-week headache which lasts until Shevuos. Neither have I found any treasure. I am a poor man."

"Then what makes your face shine so? How do you manage to look so youthful?"

"That is quite simple," Rabbi Judah answered, "I study

all the time. I study the Torah and the quest for knowledge makes the face of a man to shine."

As long as we keep our minds open and alert, as long as we are willing to try a new skill, entertain a new thought, develop a new friend, surrender an old prejudice —so long do we remain vital people, so long do we gain ground and move forward in the search for more abundant life.

God grant us in old age the blessing of the unclosed mind.

### *The Undaunted Spirit*

Fourthly, we ought to try to bring to an old age an undaunted spirit.

The plain fact is that very many of us are literally afraid of growing old. We picture ourselves in old age like "a marooned sailor watching the ship in which he once served disappearing behind the skyline." There are many symptoms of this fear. The fact that cosmetics is today a billion-dollar industry is one of them. The billboards and daily newspapers carry advertisements which make old age appear not as a stage of life but as a betrayal of it.

William Lyon Phelps once wrote about the alarm with which we greet the first gray hair. He went on to say: "Now one really ought not to be alarmed when one's hair turns gray: if it turned green or blue, then one ought to see a doctor. But when it turns gray that simply means that there is so much gray matter in the skull that there is no longer room for it; it comes out and discolors the hair. Don't be ashamed of your gray hair, wear it proudly like a flag. You are fortunate in a world of so many vicissitudes, to have lived long enough to earn it."

Now, one does not necessarily have to share Dr. Phelps' passionate love for gray hair. If we happen to prefer another color, today I suppose we have a choice and if

another color makes us more cheerful, we are each entitled to our personal preference. But Dr. Phelps is entirely correct in sounding the caution against permitting the advancing years to plant the seeds of fear in our hearts. There has been monotonous repetition and widespread acceptance of the erroneous conception that life reaches its climax in youth. Dr. Phelps recalls that when he was an undergraduate, he heard a distinguished gentleman say to the students with emphasis: "Young gentlemen, make the most of these four years; for they are the happiest years you will ever know." "That remark," he goes on to say, "was given to us with that impressiveness that so often accompanies falsehood. My classmates and I have been out of college nearly forty years; most of us are happier now than then."

Consider what it would really mean if it were true that "youth is the happiest time of life." If that were truly so, then nothing would be sadder to look at than a young man of twenty-five. For here we would see someone who had reached the very peak of existence, the absolute height, and now could only expect decay, decline, and descent into the valley. This would be the greatest insult to human personality.

If we are to face the advancing years with serenity and hope, we must realize that God has arranged human life on an ascending scale and that every age has its unique satisfactions and joys, just as every hour of the day has its own charm and loveliness. Being a father is wonderful. Being a grandfather isn't bad either. Being a great-grandfather may be even more exciting. True, old age is physical autumn, but it can be a spiritual spring-time. This is probably what George Santayana had in mind when he said: "Never have I enjoyed youth so thoroughly as I have in my old age."

God grant us in old age the blessing of the undaunted spirit.

### *Faith in His Reasonableness*

For the last, I have left what I consider to be the most precious freightage we must bring to old age—and that is faith in God and in the reasonableness of His work.

Prince Albert upon his death bed is reported to have said: "I have had wealth, rank, and power. But if this were all I had, how wretched I should be now."

There must be a great emptiness in the heart of a man who comes into the twilight of his life without the assurance that his life is not to be wasted, erased from the blackboard of life as though it never existed. How depressing it must be to believe that we have been plodding laboriously along the highway of life only to find that it leads to a dead end.

On the other hand, how soothing is the Jewish faith that "this world is only a vestibule before the palace of eternal life," or as Edwin Markham put it: "The few little years we spend on earth are only the first scene in a Divine Drama that extends on into eternity."

The belief in the indestructibility of the human soul has been one of the most passionate and persistent affirmations of all men. Philosophers and physicians, sages and scientists, poets and peasants, are all included in the mighty assemblage who answer "present" when the roll is called among the believers that death is not the end. And the more we have learned about the mysterious universe in which we live, the more persuasive have become the intimations of our immortality.

God has not endowed us with a single craving without providing us with the means of satisfying it. Every natural desire is met by the great commissary of the universe. If we hunger, there is food. If we crave for love, there are

human beings to gratify our need. Can it be that our yearning for immortality alone must remain unsatisfied? Does the universe which responds to our every other need deceive us only here? Is God a cruel prankster? Our craving for immortality in a world which satisfies our every other fundamental need and yearning points to a God who, in the words of our prayer-book, "implanted within us everlasting life."

Yes, we who believe in God cannot look upon His finest and most sensitive creation, the human being, as a "bit player" who speaks a brief stammering line on the earthly stage and then is doomed to eternal silence. Rather do we regard life here as a prologue to a magnificent drama written by the divine Playwright.

"Come grow old along with me  
The best is yet to be.  
The last of life for which the first was made."

God grant us in old age the blessing of faith in Him and in His wisdom.

#### *Prepare Now Invisible Means of Support*

Someone has complained that about the time we learn to make the most of life, the most of it is gone. It need not be so. Now is the time to begin to prepare for old age. Old Koheleth, who seems to have known only too well the path that leads to cynicism, placed a helpful marker on our road of life when he advised: "Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Yes, we should give thought to preparing *visible* means of support—but let us not forget to develop invisible means of support. Now is the time to keep that conscience clear, that mind open, that spirit courageous, that faith strong.

Henry van Dyke has summed up our theme in a poem which is also a prayer:

Let me but live my life from year to year  
With forward face and unreluctant soul.  
Not hurrying to, nor turning from the goal;  
Not mourning for the things that disappear  
In the dim past, nor holding back in fear  
From what the future veils; but with a whole  
And happy heart, that pays its toll  
To youth and age, and travels on with cheer.  
So let the way wind up the hill or down.  
O'er rough or smooth, the journey will be joy;  
Still seeking what I sought when but a boy,  
New friendship, high adventure, and a crown,  
I shall grow old, but never lose life's zest,  
Because the road's last turn will be the best.



# Ten Commandments for Parents

BY JULIUS MARK

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## Ten Commandments for Parents

*First. Be loving to your children.* Make them feel that they are wanted. Psychologists are now beginning to point out what our fathers and mothers discovered centuries ago, namely, the importance of love in a child's life. The finest thing that we can do for our children is to win their confidence, so that they will naturally unburden their hearts to us. Love is essential in every successful parent-child relationship.

*Second. Don't expect impossibilities of your children.* Many Jewish parents insist that their children must always be at the head of their class, whether they are intellectually and emotionally capable of being at the head or not. Too many parents bring unhappiness to their children through their insistence that the youngsters must make up for their parents' own failures. Such parents may deny it, but they are really looking for victories, rewards and satisfactions for themselves rather than for their children.

*Third. Never deceive your children.* You won't succeed in that deception anyway. I tried it. It will only cause your children to lose respect for you. The Talmud declares: "A person should never tell a child that he will give him something and not keep his promise, because he thereby teaches his child to tell lies," which leads to the

*Fourth commandment for parents: Keep your promises.* If it is a reward, give it. If it is punishment, inflict it. A child soon discovers whether your threat or your promise is an idle one or whether you are in earnest.

*Fifth. Correct your children's shortcomings early.* "In the beginning," declared an ancient rabbi, "sin is like a spider's web; but it soon becomes like a cable." Moral evil

is like physical. Just as disease is treated in childhood to prevent serious complications later, so faults are more easily corrected in the young than in the old.

*Sixth.* *Never exaggerate to them the values of material things.* Children of the rich are no less unfortunate in later life than are children of the poor. Early in life, the child of well-to-do parents should be taught that money is a good servant, but a harsh master. You render your child a mean disservice when you suggest, by word, or deed, or even the expression on your face, that he, the child of well-to-do parents, is superior to his classmate, whose parents are in humbler circumstances.

*Seventh.* This, too, is important. *Do nothing and say nothing that you would not want your child to do or say.* "The talk of children in the street," declare the ancient rabbis, "is the talk of their fathers and mothers at home." Your child can have little respect for his school, his teachers, his rabbis, his house of worship, his faith, his associates, if he hears you make unflattering remarks about them. If parents only knew how vital and decisive in the lives of their children are the examples which they set.

The story is related of the rabbi who, looking through a window, saw a father and son, both under the influence of strong drink, reeling in the gutter. "I envy that father," said the rabbi to his son. The son could hardly believe what he heard, so great was his astonishment. "But father, how can you say that?" asked the son. And he replied, "Because that man has succeeded in his ambition to have his son like himself. That is why I envy him. See to it, my boy, that the drunkard does not have better success with his son than I shall have with mine."

*Eighth.* *Show no favoritism among your children.* The quarrels, the jealousies, the hatreds which sometimes mar happy family life frequently originate in just such a practice. The rabbis of old were sharp in their criticism of

Jacob because of the favoritism that he displayed toward Joseph as over against his brothers. Whereupon they declared: "*A father should never make distinctions among his children.*"

*Ninth. Make your house a home for your children.* Nothing on earth can take the place of a happy, loving, harmonious home. A home in which love prevails conditions the child in his own social relationships. Oh, yes; juvenile delinquents come out of the slums. But remember, some of the outstanding citizens of our city and of our government also came from the slums. But inevitably it was shown that they were fortunate in the kind of homes from which they came though the neighborhood was definitely inferior.

Given a home in which love and consideration on the part of the parents toward one another reigns supreme, where father and mother are devoted not only to their children, but to one another, the chances are that however hard life may toss your son or daughter in the surging, onrushing waves of experience, he or she will swing back to the ideals and influences experienced in that home. The most precious memories which inspire all of us as we go through life are those associated with our childhood homes. As parents, we should consciously seek to create such experiences for our children.

*Tenth, and finally, religion.* Hard, rugged, down-to-earth experience has taught many a modern parent the bitter lesson of what may happen to a child when he is robbed of what is in reality his birthright as a human being—the knowledge and love of, as well as the participation in religious experience. Children are naturally, gloriously, wholeheartedly religious. Many become cynical as they grow older because of the lack of knowledge on the part of parents that is important to set the example for their youngsters. Children are early awakened to the mystery of life and the quest for God. We who fail to guide them intelligently and

patiently in the quest deprive them of inner serenity, inner courage, and a wholesome satisfying philosophy of life.

Our religion not only teaches us and our children the ethical principles of honor, virtue, love, and forbearance but inspires us with the heroism of our past and courage for the future. And if we meet with misunderstanding or prejudices as we walk along life's highway, a lofty, satisfying, immovable faith will immunize us and our children against the corruption of diseased minds. Our faith is not only our strongest weapon. It is our strongest shield, our buckler, our defense.

Do not make the mistake of sending your children to worship. Go with them. You will discover that as your children grow older they begin to have other interests. They have experiences which they share with other children. They have this time for you. You can play ball with your children while they are small, young, but as they grow older they do not want to play ball with you. They want to play baseball with people who can do a better job. But there is one experience that you can share with them for a long time to come. It is the experience of worshiping together in the House of God. "Families that pray together stay together."

What is the finest and most lasting bequest that we can leave to our children? Hodding Carter in his book, *When Main Street Meets the River*, quotes a very wise woman who once said to him, "There are only two lasting bequests that we can hope to give our children—roots and wings."

And they can be grown—these roots and wings—only in the home.





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